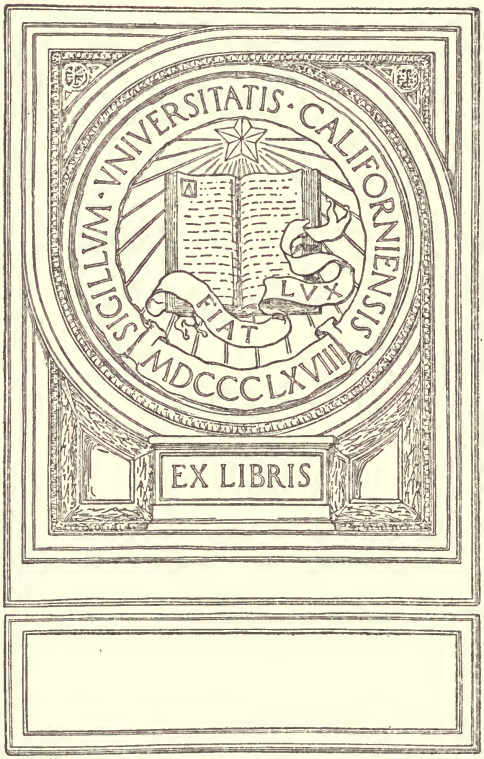
JED

A Story of Battle and Prison of Peril and Escape



"Smash 'em, smash 'em, boys!" — Page 401.

JED

A BOY'S ADVENTURES IN THE ARMY OF '61-'65

A STORY OF BATTLE AND PRISON, OF PERIL AND ESCAPE

BY

WARREN LEE GOSS

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NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.

C. J. PETERS & SON,
TYPOGRAPHERS AND ELECTROTYPERS,
145 HIGH STREET, BOSTON.

Dedicated

TO THE

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF MY COMRADES

OF THE

"GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC."

PREFACE.

IN this story the author has aimed to furnish true pictures of scenes in the great civil war, and not to produce sensational effects. The incidents of the book are real ones, drawn in part from the writer's personal experiences and observations, as a soldier of the Union, during that war. He is also indebted to many comrades for reminiscences of battle and prison life. The perilous escape of Jed and Dick, from Andersonville down the Flint and Appalachicola Rivers, to the Gulf of Mexico, is in substance the narrative of a comrade whom the writer knew at Andersonville, and afterwards met when the war had closed. The descriptions of the prison are especially truthful, for in them the author briefly tells what he himself saw.

There is not a description of battle or camp scene in the book that is not as faithful to the reality as the author can make it, and he believes that these sketches will be recognized as true, by the veterans

of the war who may chance to read them to their boys and girls.

If it be objected that boys of the age of Jed and Dick were too young for soldiers, the writer will say, that few realize how young were the men who fought the battles of the Republic. In many regiments the average age of those in the ranks was less than twenty-one years, and it was not unusual to see boys of fifteen and sixteen carrying muskets, enduring the hardships, and bearing the scars of battle.

The writer has attempted to portray a soldier's life as boy soldiers saw it; and if he has failed therein, he has failed in his purpose of conveying to the youth of to-day a reflection of that patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit which restored to us the blessings of peace, "one country and one flag."

W. L. G.

NORWICH, CONN., May, 1889.

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JED:

A BOY'S ADVENTURES IN THE ARMY OF '61 AND '65.

CHAPTER I.

JUMPING FROM THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE.

BEFORE the war began I had enlisted. In the year 1855 I was a boy twelve years of age, and even more wilful, intractable, and headstrong than boys of that age usually are. My mother having died before I was old enough to comprehend the full meaning of her loss, I lived alone with my father, a hard-working mechanic, who had always provided a good home for his family until the hard times following a financial panic had thrown him out of work. This, together with the death of my mother, had caused him to wander away in search of work or adventure, leaving me to the care of a maiden aunt about twenty-five years of age, who lived in the small village of Centerboro, thirty miles from Boston.

She was known to the villagers as "Miss Tempy," an abbreviation of the name of Temperance. She was a kind-hearted woman, and devoted to the

interests of my father, who was her only brother. Like many childless people, she had a weakness in imagining she knew all about the management of children. Whether this conceit was founded on fact or fancy is immaterial to this narrative, it being sufficient to say that her notions of a boy's capacity for obedience did not exactly coincide with mine. She was not largely endowed with this world's goods, but was in the main generous and motherly; and, when not possessed by an excruciating and peculiar sense of duty towards me, her evident fondness for me made me love her as much as I was capable of loving anything except play and mischief.

Upon the subject of obedience, which included keeping myself and my clothing clean and whole, her views and my own widely diverged. The blaze of an irrepressible conflict, if smothered at times in my own breast from motives of prudence, flamed out constantly towards me, and created a corresponding resistance on my part. But I have long seen my own errors and faults, and in maturer years have repented with many bitter regrets of my course of life at that period. I cannot but believe that the mistake of those who have charge of boys often consists in attempting to govern them too much, rather than too little. To be met at every turn by some inflexible rule is too much for the best of boys, and often results in the reverse of good to them. The attempts to govern on the part of

my aunt were fitful and violent, and were a constant source of irritation to me.

My aunt had at first received letters and money from my father after his arrival in a far-off Western settlement, where he had taken up government land; and then, for some reason I never understood, all communications and remittances ceased. From this time he dropped out of my life, until, long years afterwards, the threads of his life were again interwoven with mine by the shuttle-like events of the great civil war.

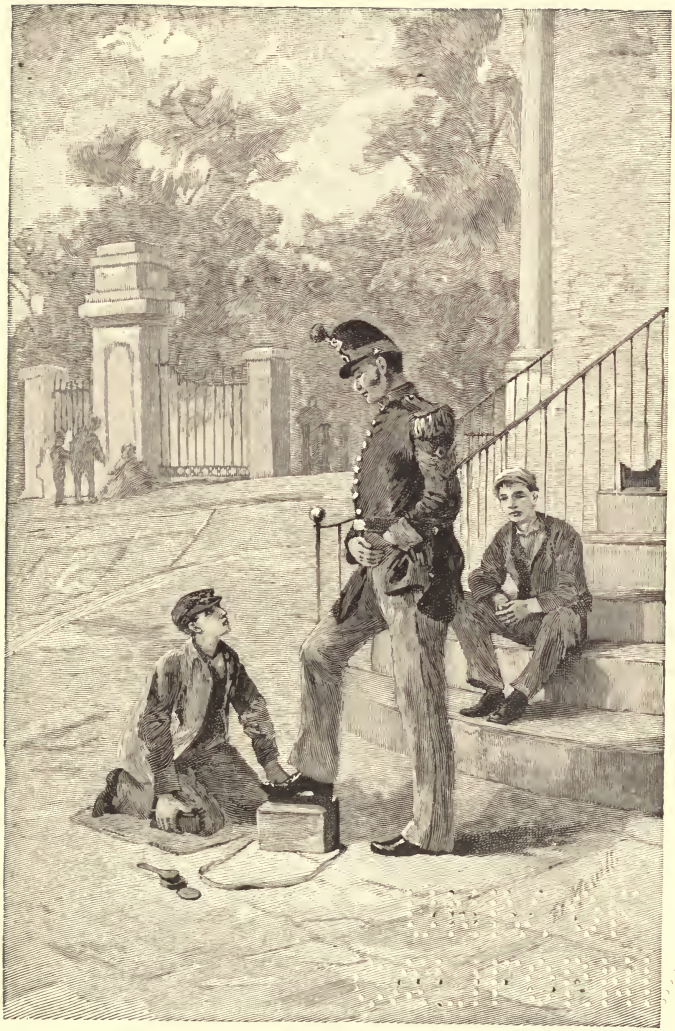
I was then at the age when a boy begins to think himself capable of self-government, and therefore is often in rebellion against all control. My aunt, as I have already hinted, had spasms of strict government, sandwiched with occasional humoring and petting; and I, on my part, had seasons of genuine repentance, as well as of rebellion.

A boy, if not brought up under restraining family influences, especially at the age mentioned, is at best but an untamed animal, whose repulsion to soap and water and discipline is in constant conflict with rules made for his restriction. If a boy at that age cannot be governed by love and reason, he might better not be governed at all; though it must be confessed it is sometimes hard to determine where a boy's love or reason has an existence.

My aunt's nervous irritability increased, while my love for mischief and adventure set at defiance her authority. To make me attend church or school

regularly, when she was too ill to accompany me, was finally beyond her power. I had passed my thirteenth birthday when, one summer day, I not only failed to go to school, but got into the quagmire of a swamp I was exploring. A new suit of clothes was wet and covered with mud by being submerged with me, and my aunt's temper and endurance failed her when I brought home with me the same afternoon a ragamuffin of the neighborhood, known as Jed, whom I loved and admired just in proportion as his life and clothing and conduct were at variance with my aunt's ideas of propriety.

Hence it was that my Aunt Tempy's patience gave out, and my endurance reached a climax, that afternoon, when, in a rage, she shut Jed and myself and his dog, which had accompanied us, into a back room without supper, and then brought out a long-threatened stick from its hiding-place, and energetically scored her displeasure upon both Jed and myself. It was the worst whipping she had ever given me, but it would have been still worse had her strength equalled her rage. It may be amusing to remember now the dance she gave myself and poor Jed and his terrified dog, but there was anything but fun in it at the time of its occurrence. It was exasperating. I could have forgiven the injury inflicted on myself, but to bring honest, loving Jed to an entertainment so disproportioned to what I considered his deserts, was more than I could endure.



"Do you know any boys who wish to enlist as drummers?"
—Page 13.

Jed, with a few finishing touches from my aunt's tongue and stick, was dismissed by the back door, while I was put to bed and locked into my room.

The next morning neither my aunt nor myself was in a repentant mood. The sight of Jed's face, swollen with undeserved marks of my aunt's displeasure, exasperated me with even a greater sense of injustice than the condition of my own cuticle. Jed, however, was as calm as a philosopher. He was polishing a pair of boots attached to the feet of our village lawyer. When, after his task was finished, he remarked, "Jingo! didn't the old lady make us dance, though?" I told Jed that I had determined to run away from home, cut the whole connection, and declare myself a free and independent person. It is due to Jed to say that he endeavored to dissuade me from such a course, but he finally concluded to accompany me to Boston, where I purposed to seek my fortune.

The same afternoon I smuggled a satchel filled with a change of clothing to a railway station about three miles from the village, and got it checked for Boston, preliminary to my own departure. I had in my pocket a jack-knife and one dollar and forty-two cents, while Jed was the possessor of seventy-five cents. The next morning, accompanied by Jed, I began my journey to Boston by line of railway; not by steam, but afoot. For the first ten miles I am afraid I did not have as keen a sense of my own discomfort as I did of satisfaction

at the retributive pain I was inflicting on my aunt by thus absconding without notice from her protection.

Anything that breaks up the ordinary routine of a boy's life is usually welcome, so natural is his thirst for adventure, and his desire to penetrate the, to him, little known paths of real life.

During the day we had bought some food in a shoe-manufacturing town on our route; and, as we could not afford to pay for a night's lodging at a hotel, we slept in a haystack in a neighboring village, half-way between the point of our departure and our destination. The next morning I was foot-sore and lame, and but for Jed's good nature, and a certain stubborn pride of my own, I believe I should have turned back and sought the forgiveness of my aunt.

Nightfall again came and found us about eight miles from Boston, and nowhere to sleep. At last we came to a decked boat lying on the shore of a creek, and with the dog we crept, shivering with cold, repentantly to rest in the ridged interior of the boat.

About midnight we were awakened by a man of unsavory garments crawling into the boat. Upon encountering us he revealed his true character by exclaiming, "Hallo. Are you on the tramp?"

In a few minutes the tramp was snoring, as Jed expressed it, "like a house a-fire," and we crept from the boat to get clear from so unwelcome a

guest. We were fairly discouraged as we renewed our line of march, and so cold that we shivered as if with the ague. Even Mink, the dog, whined and crept behind us with his tail dejectedly depressed. We cautiously crossed a long railroad bridge in the suburbs of Boston, and seeing a crate half filled with straw, crept into it and slept the sleep of tired boys.

We were awakened by some one roughly jolting the crate and exclaiming, "I'll be blamed if here isn't a whole nest of boys!" And, as I awoke, the good-natured laughing face of a boy some years older than ourselves greeted us.

There is a sort of Freemasonry among youngsters, and we soon made him understand that we were seeking our fortunes.

Not to enter at length into this stage of our adventures, he took us into the kitchen of his father's house and fed us royally, and listened with open-eyed wonder while we told him our adventures. He pronounced them "jolly," and if we were not of his mind, we were at least willing that so generous an entertainer should hold to his opinion.

The reader can imagine the forlorn condition of two inexperienced country boys, without money in a city like Boston, thirty years ago.

For days the condition of Jed, myself, and the dog, was one of chronic hunger. We were fortunate if we made money enough by polishing boots (for Jed had brought with him his boot-blacking

equipments) to give us two very economical meals a day.

It is not my purpose to depict this kind of life. It is sufficient to say that we were so hungry as to regard with favor any kind of employment which gave us enough to eat. I believe I should have returned to my aunt and have submitted to what I considered her iron rule forever, but for Jed's unfailing good humor and courage.

As it was I wrote her a letter, but before I could get the money for a stamp to mail it, incidents occurred which interrupted the whole course of my vagabond life.

I had taken a great dislike to the art of boot-blacking. Perhaps its dirt brought out the latent results of my aunt's instructions in cleanliness, and gave me a curious repulsion to the business which I had previously considered quite charming.

We had tried to ship on board of several vessels as cabin boys, but the captains usually said two cabin boys were too many, or asked us inquisitive questions about our mothers.

Such was our condition when, two weeks after our arrival in Boston, while engaged in blacking boots, a sergeant of the United States regular artillery stopped in response to my "Black yer boots, sir?"

While giving him a shine, with sidelong glances, I admired his resplendent uniform of blue with its red stripes, bright buttons and brasses.

"Boys," said the sergeant, while paying for the shine, "do you know any boys who wish to enlist as drummers?"

Without entering into details of the conversation, we soon gave him to understand that the joy of our hearts would be consummated if we could be one of those glittering personages.

How it was managed, I do not know; or who stood our god-fathers in place of our own parents; but the next day at noon we were enlisted into the service of the regular army, with the supposed consent of our parents.

The afternoon after our enlistment we were sent to a fort in Boston Harbor, then garrisoned by a company of the — th United States Artillery. Upon our arrival with other recruits we were received at the landing by a soldier in uniform, whom I believed to be no less than a general, but who proved to be a corporal of the guard.

His first salutation to us was a sharp "Fall in!" Military language was so foreign to our ears that neither Jed nor I understood. We innocently looked around us to see, as Jed afterwards quaintly remarked, "who was going to fall into what."

"Fall in!" again came the somewhat explosive command.

We still stood dazed and stupid, whereupon the corporal seized me by the shoulder and exclaiming roughly, "Why don't you fall in?" soon made me understand without a dictionary the meaning of the

command. Upon entering the fort we were assigned quarters with a squad in charge of a corporal named O'Keif. Blankets were issued to us, and a bunk pointed out for us to sleep in.

We were busy getting acquainted with our new quarters, when we heard a great thumping of drums, and again the order came to "Fall in!" We understood the order this time.

With other recruits and soldiers we were marched to a large hall or room in the barracks. Here we were soon seated at a pine table (extending the whole length of the room) on which there was a long array of bright tin plates, knives and forks, and drinking-cups. Each plate contained a piece of salt junk, two or three boiled potatoes, and a slice of wheat bread. The cups each contained nearly a quart of coffee, sweetened but without milk, while the bread did not have its familiar accompaniment of butter; neither of these luxuries being issued to the army.

The next day Jed and myself received our clothing, and were nicely fitted by the garrison tailor to drummers' suits, with their usual allotment of buttons and stripes.

After donning our new suits we were for a few hours very proud of them, but soon discovered that their possession entailed duties with which we were unfamiliar. As we were laughing, whistling, and sauntering across the parade ground, with Mink following at our heels, we encountered an

officer whom we carelessly passed. He looked at us with that cast-iron-like expression common to regular army officers, and said sharply, —

"Do you belong to this post?"

We replied that we had just arrived.

"Has no one taught you your duties yet?"

Whatever our reply was, he soon understood we were raw recruits.

"Whose dog is that?"

"That's my dog," Jed replied.

"There are no dogs in the army; they are not allowed in the quarters," said the officer sharply.

Poor Jed's lip quivered (for he dearly loved his dog) as he replied, "I tell you, mister, he's an awful nice dog; just see here," and Jed proceeded to put Mink through a series of cunning tricks which he had taught him. The officer's face relaxed into something like a smile, as he patted the dog, and calling to a passing orderly, in a grave undertone said, "Take these boys to the barracks, and send Corporal O'Keif to headquarters."

O'Keif's face fell upon receiving this order, and he growled out, "It's something about these kids, or an order to kill that confounded pup."

O'Keif soon returned smiling, while poor Jed, with quivering lip, pleaded, —

"Let me keep Mink; I'll do anything if you will let me keep my dog."

"That's all right," said the corporal pleasantly. "Captain Doughty says 'Never mind the dog.'

You must learn your duties, though; you must salute your superior officers properly, and keep your face and hands clean. Now go and black your shoes; 'shine up' them brasses and buttons."

Some of the enlisted men instructed us in brightening our buttons, and in the salute to officers, by what Jed called the "windmill business" of "one time and three motions." It was some time before we learned to recognize the difference between the commissioned and the non-commissioned officers. But as salutes to privates, corporals, and drum-majors did not offend them, this did not give us much trouble.

The Sunday morning after our arrival we were informed that there would be an inspection, and, under the instruction of the corporal, we were required not only to scrub our faces and hands, and to comb our hair, but to have every article on our persons and in our knapsacks, in an exquisite condition of neatness. The most minute care as to cleanliness was observed in everything. Muskets were cleansed and brightened inside and out, with a thoroughness almost incomprehensible to Jed and myself; while the barracks were scrubbed and washed, and actually shone with cleanliness.

The sun shone on the burnished arms of the men drawn up in bright array. The command was given "Order arms;" and as the inspecting officer passed down the line, each man threw up

his musket for inspection. From the musket of one man a slight smut adhered to the officer's white glove. The man was sharply reprimanded, and, although he had just come from guard duty, he made no explanation.

"Why," asked I of the man afterwards, "didn't you tell him?"

"No back talk to officers is allowed in the army," was his response.

The guns on the fort, and everything else, were critically examined. Men who appeared to us spotlessly clean were sternly reprimanded for some little omission; and I came in for a share of censure for not having the heels of my shoes properly blacked. The contents of each knapsack were closely examined, and while the men stood in line the quarters were examined with the same minute thoroughness.

After inspection was over, and we were marched to our quarters, Jed, with eyes protruding from his head, asked one of the privates, —

"Who washes yer clothes here?"

"Every man does his own washing in the army," was the crisp reply. Whereupon Jed looked at me, and gave his opinion of the whole proceedings in a low whistle, which the reader can interpret for himself.

If I had run away from home and gone into the army to avoid soap and water, rules and restraints, I had, as Jed said; "Jumped from the frying-pan into the fire."

CHAPTER II.

A CHANGE OF SCENE.

A FEW months after the events narrated in the foregoing chapter, an order came for our company to be ready to move at a moment's notice. The polishing of buttons, cleaning of equipments, rolling up of blankets and overcoats, and packing of haversacks and knapsacks, occupied the most of the morning hours.

My own knapsack was entirely disproportioned to my size. When it was strapped upon my back, with my other equipments of drum, haversack, etc., I could hardly identify myself amid the multitude of straps. Jed declared that he felt like a corn-stalk pith with lead in the end, liable to be suddenly reversed and stood on his head by the weight of his knapsack.

In the afternoon we were marched through the lower streets of Boston to the depot, and after two hours' ride were embarked on a steamer for New York. It was at this time that I discovered, as one of the peculiarities of army life, that the commanding officer does not consider it worth while, either on the march or from day to day, to communicate his intentions either to non-commissioned officers, privates, or even to drummers.

We had no more conception of where we were going than the spectators who idly thronged the streets. The next morning we arrived in New York, and viewed with boyish curiosity its crowded, busy streets, and listened to its Babel-like confusion of street-calls. The haste of its life so impressed Jed that he said, "I haven't seen a feller in this town who acts as if he had time to breathe or have his boots shined." After being quartered for a day or so at Governor's Island, we were embarked on another steamer, *en route* we knew not where.

The weather was pleasant, and the air grew more and more mild as the steamer, with its freight of passengers, throbbed its way along the coast, and finally landed our party of recruits amid the sands of old Point Comfort, at Fort Monroe. This fortress, with its great guns and gray granite walls, impressed us with wonder. For a few days all our spare time, when not under the rigorous drill to which we were presently subjected, was spent in investigating our surroundings.

When we left Boston snow was on the ground, and the weather was cold; while here the grass was green beneath our feet, and the buds were unrolling into leaves for the dress-parade of spring. The widespreading bay of the Chesapeake, with Norfolk dimly seen in the distance, and all our surroundings, had that charm of novelty so enchanting to boys.

One of the prominent characters of the fort at

this time was Sergeant Gruff. He was a short, red-faced son of Germany, who had grown gray in the service. Years before, it was said, he had enlisted as a musician, and had been in the Mexican war. His complexion and face were as rough as his manners, voice, and temper. In the estimation of the garrison, as well as in the circumference described by his belt, he was a great man.

So thoroughly was he imbued with military methods, that Jed declared that he ate in one time and three motions (as if practising a sort of manual of arms), and saluted himself with his knife and fork after eating. He was a martinet, and insisted upon the letter, as well as the spirit, of all military performances. In justice to this old veteran, it must be said that he commanded the respect of the officers of the garrison, and was a man of education and an excellent soldier.

Jed had made a belt and equipments for Mink, and taught him to hold a miniature musket while "sitting up." A week or so after our arrival Jed was exercising his dog in his favorite tricks to an admiring audience of soldiers. Even a lieutenant had condescended to become an amused spectator of the performance.

Up to this time there had been no objection made to Mink's presence in the quarters, but, as luck would have it, some of the soldiers suggested a resemblance between Mink and Sergeant Gruff, and the conceit was so amusing that they addressed the

dog by the old sergeant's name. The sergeant, in passing, overheard the comparison, and angrily roared out his displeasure, dispersed the crowd, and ordered poor Mink from the garrison quarters.

Jed begged and pleaded, but it was useless; the sergeant was inexorable. For a time Mink skulked outside the fort, repulsed by guard and garrison. Easy-going Jed was much disgusted with army life, — a sentiment which was at that time strongly indorsed by my own feelings.

A soldier's life may be enchanting when seen in occasional glimpses on dress-parade or review, but often is the reverse when it becomes a part of one's daily life.

There is in all garrisons and regiments a winking at the employment of soldiers as menials, for which there is no warrant in army regulations. A private soldier, perhaps, to gain a few extra dollars each month, acts as a barber. A sergeant or corporal often is mean enough to exact this service from a private without pay. There is no reason why the subordinate should perform these duties other than to win the favor of his immediate superior, that he may thereby escape some more real duty.

Jed and I at times attempted to earn a little extra money by blacking the shoes of the soldiers, whereupon Corporal O'Keif, of our squad, began to exact this service from us as his due, without paying for it. I had never fancied blacking shoes since

my Boston experience in that line, and only on rare occasions blacked any one's shoes but my own. I had just come from duty at the guard quarters one morning when Corporal O'Keif, as imperiously as a king of Prussia, ordered me to clean and black a pair of muddy shoes for him. I refused. The corporal had been drinking, and was in unusually bad temper that morning, whether because a bottle of old rye had given out, or because of his supreme pleasure, I do not know.

"What in blazes did you come into the army for? to be a gentleman?" he angrily roared.

"Not to black an Irish blackguard's boots," was my equally angry reply.

The corporal attempted to chastise me, but I was a better runner than he, and, though pursued furiously, I kept far enough in advance to tantalize and lead him on. The race drew together quite an audience, who applauded me and gibed at the corporal. The corporal was almost blind with anger and whiskey, when Jed suddenly stepped out in front of him with the corporal's shoes, well blacked, in his hand. Before Corporal O'Keif could halt he had tumbled on to Jed, and began to beat him.

When Jed at last escaped from the corporal's embrace, with well-assumed humility he said, "I don't see what you want to run after me and beat me for. I ain't done nothin' but shine your shoes."

The corporal could hardly believe his senses when Jed held his well-blacked shoes toward him.

"And sure are yez the bye I have been chasing?" said he.

"Yes, and pounding too, corporal," said Jed.

"Be jimminy! how did yez get toime to black them shoes when I was chasing yez?"

"Dick likes to run, and he was running some too, so as to give me time," was Jed's rather lame explanation, but which I have no doubt would have satisfied the corporal, but for the jeers and roars of laughter from the spectators.

These caused the Irish corporal to walk away with his shoes, meditatively using in an undertone misplaced theological words.

I had seen by this time enough of soldier's life in garrison to understand that it was not enough for one simply to do his duty to obtain favor. He must make as many friends as possible.

Shortly after the scene narrated, while Jed and I were on pass at the village of Hampton, we made a friend of Sergeant Gruff.

The worst vice of the soldier is drunkenness, and the sergeant had either been unfortunate in his selection of liquors, or had forgotten to keep score with his usual circumspection, and was drunk. His person, ordinarily the model of neatness, was soiled, his garments muddy, and generally the old soldier was in poor plight for dress-parade, or even ordinary duty.

No one knew this better than the old veteran himself. He said "his het vas sober, if his legs ver

trunk." Jed was full of compassion for the old sergeant, and remarked that he reminded him so much of his own dad as to almost make him cry.

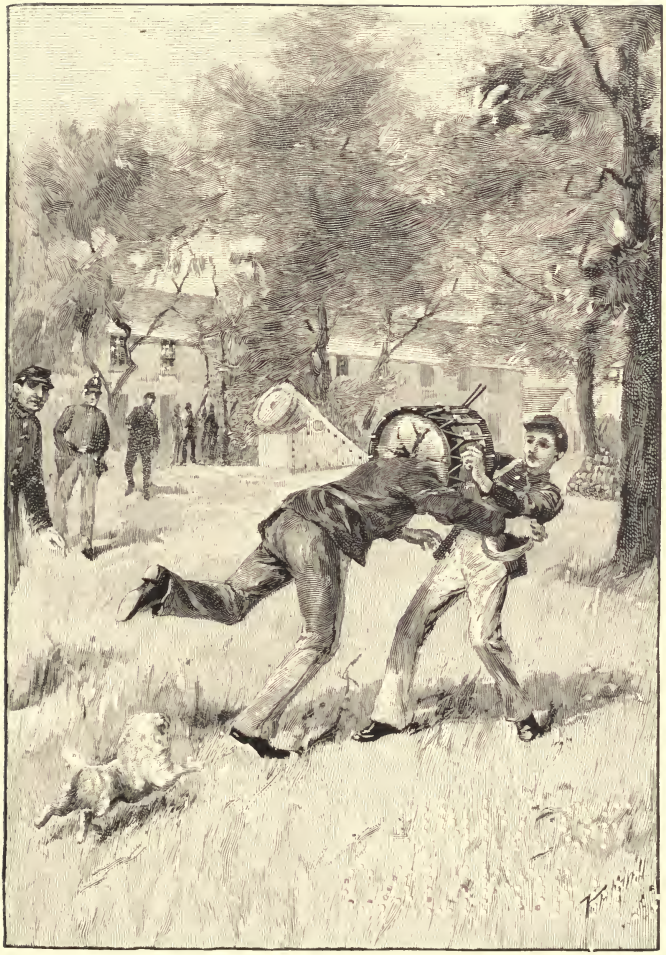
"See here, sergeant," said Jed, "you can't get into port without a pilot, and Dick and I will help you."

The sergeant looked unsteadily at us for a moment, and then, with the ejaculation, "Go aheat, poys," surrendered himself to our direction.

We helped him into a neighboring house, cleaned his clothes, and I pumped water on his head while Jed rubbed it hard and wiped it dry. Under this process (to which he submitted with surprising docility) he gradually straightened up, saying, "Smart poys, smart poys. Make shenerals pefore you die."

We finally succeeded in getting him to his quarters without any one suspecting his condition, and the old sergeant thenceforward became our firm friend. Mink was admitted to the garrison, and was sometimes to be seen asleep on the sergeant's lap.

Sergeant Gruff was a man of superior education, having, it was said, been educated in one of the great German universities for the priesthood. He often invited Jed and myself into his quarters, and instructed us in the higher duties of a soldier, gave us lessons in bayonet drill, sword exercise, and directed us in the study of the infantry and artillery text-book. He also advised us in the selection



I "fended off" with the drum, through which his head crashed. — Page 26.

of books to read from the well-stocked garrison library. He had the true spirit of a teacher, for he made us desire to know more than he taught us. It was his judicious instruction and intelligent observations that gave me, for the first time, a real love for military life, and which in time made both Jed and myself good subordinates, imbued with that spirit of discipline which alone can make one fit for higher positions. For one must learn to obey before they can command; or, as Sergeant Gruff said, "Know how to do a ting right pefore you try to make some vone else do it right."

Another of the veteran's maxims was, "Keeps your temper alvays. If you gets mat, get mat mit your equal, not mit your superior officer. That will be so vorse for you as dunder." This was good advice, which, if I had taken, would have saved me much trouble, as the sequel will show.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE GUARD-HOUSE.

I HAD been on guard duty one day when O'Keif was corporal of the guard. This Irish "non com" had not forgiven me for refusing to polish his shoes, or for making him ridiculous by playing tricks on him, as he insisted on calling the performance narrated in a former chapter.

Since that time he had shown his resentment in various ways, and never ceased to find fault with me when I was on duty under him. That morning, after being relieved from guard duty, the corporal told me I did not know how to drum, and had not beaten the *reveille* correctly. In this the corporal had more conceit than knowledge; and in any case, it was not his duty to instruct me, or mine to receive his instruction in drumming. When, therefore, he attempted to take the drum-sticks from my hands, I resisted. In the squabble which followed, while I was backing away from him, his foot tripped, and at the same time I "fended off" with the drum, through which his head crashed (with a little of my assistance), leaving the drum resting on his shoulders like some patent substitute for his own head. Had the affair ended here it would have been

fortunate for me; but Mink, fancying that I was being abused, had been snapping at O'Keif's heels and had now seized the broadest part of his trousers. The fun of the situation was too much for me, and bestriding the corporal's shoulders, I began beating the sick call on the drum. This, with the barking of Mink, and the howls of anger from O'Keif, drew together a crowd to witness the humorous tableau. Even the officers came to the scene, and among them was the commandant.

O'Keif had now got to his feet, and was pulling the drum from his head, and filling the air with exclamations, when the commandant cried out, —

"Here, here! what does this mean?"

"This blackguard of a bye has been beating me head with the drum, and is the devil with his thricks," was the confused response. The commandant walked away without comment, but later in the day I was sent to the guard-quarters under arrest.

My offence from a military standpoint was a serious one, which few who are not conversant with military exactions will understand. I was guilty not only of insubordination, but of striking my military superior. I cannot say, however, that I took a very serious view of the affair.

Among the prisoners at the guard-house was the fifer, O'Meara. He was about forty-five years of age and had been in the service twenty years. He was an intelligent man, but was intemperate,

and the offence for which he was in durance was getting drunk and overstaying his pass.

"Yez in a scrape, and no mistake, youngster," said he.

"Why?" asked I, not having a proper sense of my offence.

"Why now, me bye, don't you see, a court-martial is convened to convict, and considers the culprit guilty until he's proved to be innocent. The only chance is that they may drop ye like a hot potato without a trial."

"How do you mean?" said I.

"Why, after keeping yez here a while, they may put yez on duty again without a word, and yez'd be a lucky bye if they do."

"What shall I do?" I inquired.

"Say nothing, but saw wood," was the sage advice of the fifer, drawn doubtless from long experience.

I soon found that being a prisoner under guard meant doing the servile work of the garrison, such as cleaning rusty muskets, sweeping the parade ground, and washing out the officers' quarters.

In the eyes of the soldiers whom I met, there did not appear to be any particular disgrace attached to being in the guard-house. I spread my blanket on the sloping shelf-like boards which formed its sleeping accommodations, and soon felt as much at home there as anywhere.

The "don't know" and "do care" qualities

of youngsters, which spring from ignorance and inexperience, often stand them in as good stead as the philosophy of their elders. To them, trouble in prospective exists simply in name. Youth lives in the present, and borrows no trouble from the future. This is well, for trouble comes soon enough in reality without borrowing it by anticipation.

Another of the prisoners at this time was a young man named Walker who had joined the army some months before as a recruit. His offence had been in trying to force the guard. He had been intercepted while attempting to "run the guard," had wrested a musket from one of them, and had nearly effected his escape when he was overpowered. He had an intelligent but imperious face, was educated, and his person as well as manners and conversation showed intelligence and refinement. He was of magnificent physique, tall, straight, and graceful. Of his parentage, home, and real name we knew nothing, and could learn nothing except that Walker was an assumed name. He had learned the drill as if by intuition, while his military bearing made him a prominent figure in the ranks on the parade ground. It was surmised that he had run away from school or college. Just before he was to have been summoned before the court-martial, he was visited by a well-known gentleman of the vicinity, who held a private conversation with him, and later was closeted with the commanding officer. A few evenings after this

while out under guard, it was said that Walker wrested a musket from the guard and escaped. He was never heard from in the garrison again.

The wise ones among the garrison soldiers shook their heads sagely, as if there were more in the affair than appeared on the surface. It was not until the War of the Rebellion was in progress that I saw him again, and the matter was in part made clear.

During my imprisonment I was constantly visited by Jed and his dog. It was remarked that my guard-house life wore on Jed worse than on me. Sergeant Gruff one morning came to the guard-quarters, and, after some informal talk with the officer of the day, said, "Vell, youngster, you've prought your pigs to a fine market," and talked to me with great severity about my military misdeeds. At his request I gave him a full, and, in the main, correct account of the affair from my own standpoint. It seems that my version was fully sustained by others, to whom I referred the old sergeant.

The court-martial was convened, and the trials began. I had thought it possible that the influence of Sergeant Gruff might stand me in good stead, but was not prepared for what followed, when, one morning I was released, and unceremoniously placed on duty.

The experience of nearly a month in the guard-house had a salutary effect upon me. It made me

see the folly of giving way to temper, or of yielding to my propensity for mischievous fun. Though with maturer years I have never lost my sense of humor, I have managed to hold it subject to the rules of common sense, sufficiently at least to restrain me from beating the sick call on my superior's head.

Sergeant Gruff having been instrumental in obtaining my release, took me under his especial protection. Jed had already been installed in the sergeant's affections. When asked why he exerted himself in my behalf, he is said to have replied, "Zat poy Jed, he vas so pale and goot for notting at all, until dat youngster vas let out of the guard-house."

Jed had now lost the look of premature age noticeable on his face when we first knew him. Sergeant Gruff visited boon companions and the lager-beer kegs less than formerly, as if he had taken a new interest in life with the concern he had for his "poys." It was my delight to read aloud to the old sergeant until his pipe dropped from his mouth, and he fell asleep in his garrison chair. On such occasions the dog would noiselessly get down from his knees, and Jed would give him a little shake and help him to bed. Sometimes the sergeant would sleepily say, "Such a poy as dot Jed never vas pefore."

The lives of those around us were a standing commentary on the evils of drunkenness; and, hap-

pily for both Jed and myself, we profited by their example, and shunned strong drink. The advice of Sergeant Gruff was also in favor of sobriety. "Poys, I should have pen a sheneral if I hat not pen such a trunkard," was an often repeated saying of his. Again he would say, "Trink makes a hog of a man." I have since believed that it is the association of boys with genteel drinkers that makes drunkards of them, rather than companionship with the vice in its more beastly forms.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLESTON ON THE EVE OF THE REBELLION.

NEARLY four years had elapsed since the scene of our last chapter. We were now almost men. Jed was eighteen years old, tall, straight, and with a fine physique and manly bearing. Study under Sergeant Gruff had given a thoughtful cast to his face; while the wholesome diet and methodical habits of military life had formed both his body and mind in a vigorous mould. At this time I was slight in form, yet in robust health.

As a new love will sometimes kill out an old one, so the veteran had in part been reformed from drink in the new direction given to his life by his love for his "two poys."

In the summer of 1860, we formed a part of the garrison of Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, at the entrance of Charleston Harbor. This island is three miles long and not over a quarter of a mile broad, and is separated from the mainland by a scarcely perceptible creek which oozes through a marsh and is hidden by beds of reeds. The island is composed of little else than sea sand, overgrown with masses of sweet myrtle, and re-

lieved by a stunted growth of bristly palmetto, rising above its margin of hard white beach.

Fort Moultrie was situated at the eastern extremity of this sandy island.

Near the Fort there were a summer hotel and a collection of frame buildings, forming a little village known as Moultrieville. The garrison consisted of two companies of United States Artillery, then commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel John L. Gardner.

In my frequent visits to Charleston I had a good opportunity to observe the prevalent feeling in that city during the excitement preceding the election of Mr. Lincoln.

At this time the bitterness then existing against the North and Northern men can scarcely be understood.

The great topic of conversation on every side was politics, and of what Carolina proposed to do in the event of the election of the "abolition" candidate, as they called Mr. Lincoln.

"Abolitionists," "black Republicans," "nigger lovers," were epithets applied indiscriminately to Northern men.

One of the great men of Charleston at this time was Robert Barnwell Rhett, of whom I once heard some one seriously affirm that if Rhett's full appellation were abridged by the omission of a single syllable or letter, he would make it an affair of honor, and insist upon a personal meeting with the one who thus curtailed it.

My humble position did not admit of the acquaintance of such gentlemen, and I speak only from hearsay.

In the groceries, markets, and lounging rooms, during August, threats of secession, in case Mr. Lincoln was elected, were as common as oaths. After the election was made, the people were wild with excitement, and the military situation at Fort Moultrie became serious. The entire garrison consisted of but sixty-three enlisted men, with thirteen musicians. The walls of Fort Moultrie were not over twelve feet high, while its masonry was in such a cracked and crumbling condition that I had often climbed it.

On the shore side of the fort, looking toward Fort Sumter, there was a large sand-bank almost on a level with its walls. Minor sand-hills in the vicinity would have sheltered sharpshooters, or have proved excellent positions for artillery in an attack on the fort.

One morning after Mr. Lincoln's election, Corporal O'Keif, with a piece of chalk and a board, was explaining the military situation and its needs.

"You see, byes," said he, "we need some of them sticks tied together they call 'fascines,' and some of them baskets without a bottom they call 'gabions.' The difficulty is, we've got nothing to make 'em of but palmetto, and they'd tear the hands off a steam-engine."

Sergeant Gruff, who had been a sneering listener to these explanations, kicked away the board on which O'Keif was demonstrating the military problem, saying, "Dunder, man! vat you dinks? Cows can vrun right over dese walls. Vat we want is to find out how ve gets out of dis trap, and not how to stays here."

The correctness of the bluff sergeant's views was afterward demonstrated.

The sentiment of Charleston, and even Moultrieville, meanwhile, became each day more and more defiant. "Carolina don't want soldiers in old Moultrie, sah. If the Lincoln government don't clar them out, we do it for them, sah."

I heard a person in Charleston holding forth one day on what was evidently his favorite subject; namely, the cowardice of the Yankees.

"The Yankees won't fight. You can't kick them into a fight. When the South goes out of the Union, the North will beg like dogs to come with us, sah. Like dogs, sah."

The re-opening of the slave-trade, as one of the accompaniments of secession, was also much discussed. I heard one man affirm that if Carolina seceded, the slave-trade would be re-opened, and then poor whites could buy negroes "dirt cheap." "At ten dollars apiece, sah. Every white man can be a gentleman, sah."

It was not believed at that time that the government at Washington would re-enforce Moultrie.

The opinion was freely expressed that the men of the garrison were fools to stay in the fort and resist an attack. Most of the officers had family connections in the South, and were therefore affected to a great degree by the social atmosphere of Charleston. It was natural that they should not relish the thought of fighting against people with whom they had hitherto associated on most amiable and friendly terms.

After Major Anderson's arrival, which was about the 24th of September, it was generally understood among us that, though he was Southern in his sympathies, he would allow no one to coax or coerce him into an attitude dishonorable to our government. Like most good soldiers, however, he preferred peace to war.

It was some time in September, also, that our little garrison was excited by the arrival of Captain John G. Foster as engineer, with Lieutenants Snyder and Mead as assistants, to repair and strengthen Fort Moultrie.

While these repairs were going on, and the sand heaps were being removed from around its walls, we heard loud threats, on every side, of an attack on the fort.

A party which was sent in boats to obtain ammunition at the Arsenal on the south side, found upon their arrival, a mob of Charleston people in possession, and returned without accomplishing their object. When Sergeant Gruff was interrogated as to

Major Anderson's probable designs he replied, "I pelieve the major means to fight."

On the 11th of September, it will be remembered, a bill was passed by the South Carolina Legislature to arm the militia, and on the 20th, South Carolina passed the ordinance of secession; or, as I heard a boastful citizen declare, "Carolina became a free and independent nation." The same citizen declared in my hearing, "If you all don't want to be killed, you'd better get out of hyer." Another person expressed pleasure that the fort was being repaired, as it "saved South Carolina the expense of doing it."

Judge Petigru, of South Carolina, paid our officers a visit about this time. He was an exception to the great mass of South Carolina people in being a pronounced Union man. He is said to have replied to the question of what he thought of secession by saying, "South Carolina, sir, is not big enough for a nation, and is too big for an insane asylum."

It was rather trying to human nature to be constantly abused, as every one representing the Federal Government was at this time, by the people around us. The citizens of Charleston were, however, generally kind to us as individuals, though they were abusive to us as a class. In my association with Southern men and women I have often found this to be the case.

The worst abuse of the Lincoln party and of Northern men that I heard at this time was from

the citizen workmen of Charleston and the masons from Baltimore engaged on the repairs of Moultrie.

While bargaining for some pies with an old negro at Moultrie one day, I casually mentioned that I was a Yankee. After glancing around him he said, while his attention was apparently riveted on a pie, "My old massa say Linkum gwine to set all the colored men free."

Under the superintendence of Captain Foster the sand was dug away from the shore side of Fort Moultrie, and the ditches and masonry repaired. Had a resolute attack been made while the repairs were going on, it is safe to say there could have been but little resistance made. The guns had been dismounted, but by the middle of November they were again in position, and thenceforth the garrison was drilled in artillery practice. Shell or torpedoes were arranged around the fort in such a manner as to explode when a board connected with them was trodden upon.

At our target practice and torpedo experiments there was commonly a crowd of talkative, observant citizens. They were apparently much impressed with the destructiveness of our artillery, as well as by the possibilities of the torpedoes.

I overheard one of them remark that "the torpedoes around that fort would blow up an army." Afterwards, however, when similar explosives were encountered by the Union army at Yorktown, they did not prove to be so terrible.

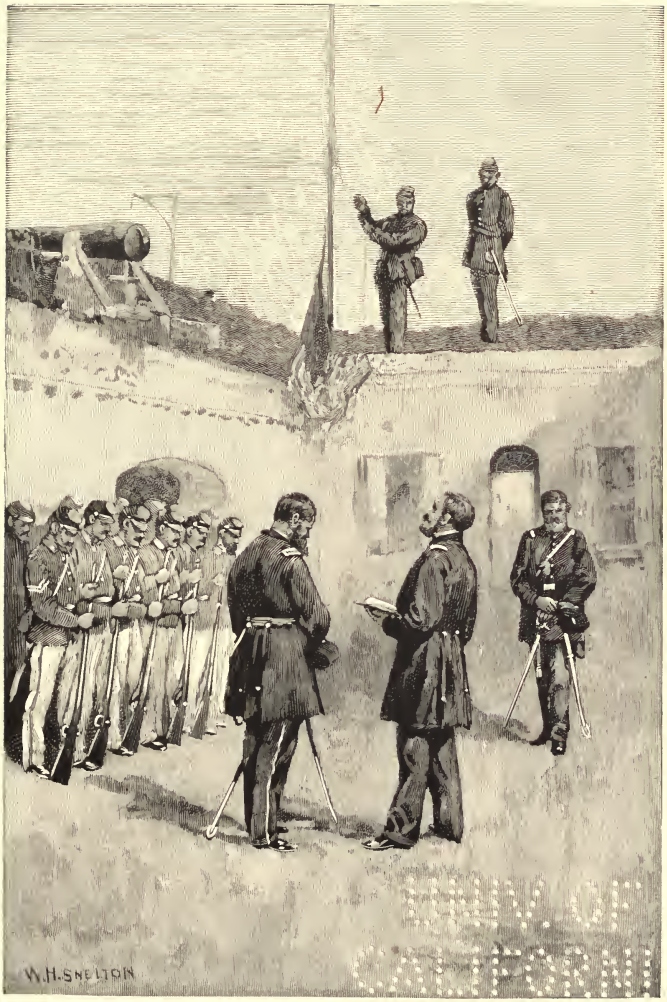
Among those who occasionally visited the fort was Captain Northrup, an officer in the United States Army, on sick leave and full pay, who subsequently became Commissary-General of the Confederacy. He was afterward accused of speculating on the rations of both Union prisoners of war and of Confederate soldiers.

Our garrison was too small for efficient guard duty, there being only five or six men, for one hour each, stationed on guard as a precaution against a surprise.

At last an unexpected climax came. Just after dress-parade, on the evening of the 26th of December, before either officers or men had had their supper, the order came, "Get ready to move at a moment's notice."

Threats of an attack on Fort Moultrie had furnished the commander with a plausible pretext for the removal of the garrison families to some dilapidated government buildings at Fort Johnson, on the west side of the harbor. The schooners, chartered ostensibly for carrying the families, were also secretly loaded with stores, with instructions to the quartermaster to land the provisions at Fort Sumter.

In the twilight we silently marched out of the Fort and embarked on board of boats which for this purpose had been concealed behind an old sea wall. One of our officers, with five men, was left behind to man the guns, with orders to sink the



"Raising the flag at Sumter." — Page 45.

Charleston guard-boats, which at this time were patrolling the harbor, if they fired upon us.

In crossing the channel we were ordered to take off our coats and throw them over the muskets.

It may have been owing to this that although one of the little steamers patrolling the harbor came very near our boats they did not notice the character of its passengers. They doubtless supposed us to be a party of workmen from Fort Sumter, returning to that fort.

Upon the landing of the first boat the actual laborers had rushed out of the fort to oppose the landing of troops, but without much opposition (beyond the clamor of tongues) our men took possession. That night we ate our supper in Fort Sumter, and the next morning there was great excitement in Charleston over the intelligence that Fort Sumter had, in some mysterious way, been garrisoned.

CHAPTER V.

THE CURTAIN OF WAR RISES.

THE removal of the garrison from Moultrie to Sumter had been conducted with so much secrecy that even the people of Moultrieville were not aware of the evacuation until late the following forenoon.

Captain Foster, of the Engineers, visited the Fort on that morning with a detachment for guard, and finding it deserted, after removing stores and war munitions, set fire to the gun carriages and such stores as could not be removed.

Our officers and men were elated at having stolen so successful a march upon those who thought they were to have everything their own way.

It is even said that the Charleston people were angry at our want of politeness in making so important a move without consulting them. Illustrative of this, that very afternoon two officers from town in full uniform waited upon Major Anderson, and politely but sternly requested him to return with his command to Fort Moultrie. The insurgents are said to have considered it an additional affront and grievance that our commander did not comply with this modest request.

Early in the morning after our arrival, Jed and I went over the fort to view our new quarters. It was what Jed called a two-story fort; that is, arranged for an upper and lower tier of guns.

It was constructed of brick and stone, and was five-sided or pentagonal in form, but was as yet in an unfinished condition. Sergeant Gruff pointed out to us that the fort had no flanking defences, and was so incomplete that it would require weeks of labor to put it in a proper defensive condition.

The upper tier of embrasures or openings for guns, were simply irregular holes, roughly boarded up, while on the gate side only a few guns were as yet mounted. The interior of the fort was obstructed with the rubbish of masonry, and had no fire-proof quarters for officers or men, unless the chambers in the ramparts or casemates might be so considered.

Fort Sumter stands midway at the mouth of Charleston Harbor; while Castle Pinckney is on the right of and near the city, at the mouth of the Cooper River.

Jed and I, while on the ramparts facing Charleston, could hear the sound of church bells in the city, a little over three miles distant, and see its spires and houses distinctly. While the men of the garrison were on the ramparts, one of the little steamers patrolling the bay came near the fort. There was evidently great excitement on board at sight of our crowded ramparts.

This steamer conveyed to Charleston, it is said, the first intelligence that the fort had been mysteriously garrisoned during the night.

On our right was Fort Moultrie, about a mile away; Fort Johnson on our left, a little over the same distance; while Cumming's Point was less than a mile on our left rear.

It was from this last-named fort, under easy reach of our guns, that formidable batteries covered with railroad iron were erected, and from which the first gun was afterwards fired upon Sumter.

At all these points, with the exception of Charleston, the insurgents began erecting, without interference from us, the batteries which afterwards opened their encircling fire upon Sumter.

For days and weeks succeeding our arrival, steamers and vessels laden with material for the construction of these works passed under the very muzzles of our guns, and old hulks were being sunk in the ship channel to obstruct navigation.

In view of the forbearance which refrained from disturbing these treasonable preparations, it is not to be wondered at that a rebel officer (Captain Hartstein, formerly of the United States Navy) intimated that he would like permission of the officers at Sumter to anchor his iron-clad floating battery near the main gate.

This illustrates how little the United States Government did to bring on the conflict which

followed. It has been asserted, and I believe it to be true, that at this time a single ship of war could have sailed up Charleston Harbor to its wharves and have nipped the rebellion in the bud.

At noon on the first day of our occupation, an impressive service took place. The men were formed in the fort under arms; and after a prayer by the chaplain, and while the band played, they presented arms as the stars and stripes were raised over the fort.

The work of putting the fort in a condition of defence began at once. Guns were mounted, sand bags filled and piled up, and the rubbish cleared away. A mine was constructed at the end of the wharf; while the walls, which at that point were quite thin, were strengthened by a new wall of masonry, and only an entrance large enough for a single man left. This entrance was commanded by a howitzer loaded with canister. The ragged embrasures were also properly finished.

On the same day that we raised the National flag over Sumter, the Charleston people raised the flag of revolt over Castle Pinckney. Men of the detachment who had accompanied Captain Foster to Moultrie, on returning, saw the insurgents going over to this fort in their boats.

The castle had been garrisoned by Ordnance Sergeant Skillen. That his daughter was worthy to be a soldier's daughter, is shown by her subsequent conduct. When the Charleston insurgents took

possession it is said they found her crying. One of the gallant invaders, thinking to comfort her said, "My dear young lady, no one will hurt you; don't cry."

With flashing eyes, Miss Kate replied, "I am not crying because I am afraid, but because that miserable rag [pointing to the palmetto flag] is where the stars and stripes belong. If I had a dozen women here with brooms I'd drive you out of the fort."

Her father was said to have made several ineffectual applications for more men and munitions, in order that he might turn the guns of Fort Pinckney upon Charleston.

The spirit of both officers and men at this crisis was right, but was subordinated to the desire of placing the insurgents in the wrong.

The Charleston people seized Castle Pinckney and Fort Moultrie, and also the United States revenue cutter in the harbor, without the formality of even a declaration of war. This last act was clearly one of piracy.

It was exasperating to see this revenue vessel of the United States thereafter anchored near Sumter, overhauling our mails, and everything which came to us.

Sergeant Gruff, who despised civilians, said it showed what fools politics made of men. "Soldiers," said he, "should not have anything to do mit politics, poys; it makes fools mit eferybody dot mixes mit it."

While we do not indorse the old sergeant's sweeping axiom, yet had it been afterwards generally adopted by officers in high command, it would have saved them from many humiliations.

To understand our situation more clearly, it is needful to say that the laborers found here upon our arrival, had mostly been detained to work on the fort, and that the wives and children of the soldiers now joined the garrison at Sumter. These additional mouths used up our rations very fast. In a few weeks we were out of sugar, and had no candles by which to light our quarters. In a little lighthouse inside the fort, a small quantity of oil had been found which was used for this purpose. The garrison was also out of soap for washing clothes, and fuel for heating the quarters, although there was enough for cooking the food.

Sometimes we were allowed to purchase supplies in Charleston, and again were refused the privilege. The market-men at times refused to sell us food, and had, as Jed said, "spasms, both in their prices and their disposition to sell."

The wives of Captains Doubleday and Seymour both came to the fort soon after our occupation, but for some reason returned to Charleston. When they endeavored to obtain board in that city it is said they were referred to Mr. Rhett, editor of the *Mercury*, for permission to do so.

The sentiment against Federal officers and their wives was so strong that these ladies were finally

sent North; and in February the wives and children of the soldiers were also sent, in the steamer *Marion*, to Fort Hamilton in New York Harbor.

The days dragged monotonously along, relieved by occasional visits of outsiders, who roamed at will over the fort. Among our visitors was a Major Anderson, the owner of the Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond, who came to Charleston to bring heavy guns and munitions of war to the insurgents.

A photographer also came to photograph the officers and men of the garrison. At another time Mr. Lamon, said to have been a former law-partner of Mr. Lincoln, came with Colonel Duryea of Charleston.

One morning in February (the 9th, I think it was), Jed and myself, who slept together, were awakened and ordered to beat the long roll, calling the men to their positions at the guns. We heard heavy firing from several directions, and when at liberty saw, from one of the embrasures of the fort, a ship with the stars and stripes at her fore peak in the main ship channel, off Morris Island.

The batteries, both at Cumming's Point and at Fort Moultrie, were firing upon her. She had quickly passed from under the range of the guns at Cumming's Point, but, receiving no sign from Sumter, finally turned and sailed down the channel again, and out into the ocean. It was the *Star of the West*, with men and supplies for Sumter.

The forbearance of our military representatives at this time is again shown in the fact that all around us, in plain sight, were to be seen gangs of workmen building batteries and mounting guns, before which our defences were to prove as impotent as if built of cardboard.

In March, after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln and the establishment of the Confederacy, when a practice shot from one of the enemy's guns at Cumming's Point struck near our wharf, we expected the fight to begin. Corporal O'Keif growled because the men were not called to their guns to return this fire, as by this time severe guard duty, short rations, and anger at many vexatious humiliations, made the men anxious to begin the fight before they became weaker and the insurgents stronger.

By the 1st of April our guns were in position, and many of the workmen were shortly afterwards sent to Charleston. Our fuel, which had for some time consisted of the wooden sheds of the fort, had been entirely consumed, while for rations we had only pork and water.

A schooner which attempted to enter Charleston Harbor on the 3d, with the stars and stripes flying at her mast-head, was fired upon by the Confederates, and the men were ordered again to the guns, but did not return the fire.

On the 10th some houses opposite us at Moultrieville were torn down, disclosing a formidable

battery, commanding our heaviest guns. The same afternoon Major Anderson received a demand for the surrender of Fort Sumter; and preparations on every side pointed to the speedy opening of a conflict which should roll back the curtain of peace, disclosing a terrible civil war.

On the night of Thursday, the 10th of April, I was drummer of the guard. During the day I had asked Sergeant Gruff if he thought we should really have a fight. "Fight, poy! Why, vat they digs all dese earthworks round us for? They mean pizness, poy, pizness." And then the old sergeant added, with a groan, "Politics, politics, politics," as if this word was a key to the madness and passion of the hour, and the conflict which was about to burst upon us.

"Byes," said Corporal O'Keif at guard-quarters, "the ribels have already fired on the American flag, and bedad! it seemed to like the sinsation."

The reserve of the guard, about four o'clock next morning, was awakened by a shot from the enemy. It was their signal gun from Fort Johnson for the opening of the battle. Before I could reach the ramparts a shot from the battery at Cumming's Point crashed through the walls on the side nearest the gate of Sumter. When I reached the parapet, the flash of guns all around us, and the roar of artillery, together with crashing shot on our crumbling walls, showed that the conflict had begun.

Several officers and men were already on the

parapets. One of them said jestingly, "You see, they have begun their entertainment."

"Those who open the ball don't always dance with the last set, though," said an Irish private near me.

The men were ordered from the parapet by the officers for fear of casualties, and sent to their quarters.

"Get all the sleep you can, you'll need it," said one of them. But there was no longer any sleep for the garrison at Sumter.

"Just as if any one could sleep with the brick tumbling down like that," growled O'Keif, as a shot struck the upper walls, and flakes of masonry fell around us.

The shell from the mortar batteries of the enemy, sailing through the air, came down vertically inside the walls, and, exploding, shook the fort with the concussion. For an hour the shell fell into Sumter, and the shot went crashing through its walls without a reply from the garrison. We had no means of lighting the fort, and had to wait for daylight. When at last it was broad day, and the garrison had eaten a meagre meal of pork and water, the men were ordered to the guns. The interval seemed a day, instead of an hour.

"The fellers on t'other side save us the trouble of beating a very long roll," said Jed jestingly, as we began to rattle off the call to summon the garrison.

The first detachment, under Captain Abner Doubleday, from the southeast side of the fort, began firing on the battery at Cumming's Point. The shot struck its slanting, iron-clad roof, and rebounded like rubber balls when thrown on top of a shed. Nineteen batteries of the enemy were now throwing shot and shell into Sumter.

In view of the small number of men in the garrison, the major commanding did not think it prudent to man the upper tier of guns. Those in the upper tier, however, were our heaviest metal, best commanded the guns of the enemy, and could have been brought to bear on the foe where those of the lower tier could not. These guns were fired only once during the fight, and then without orders, by an Irish sergeant, who could not resist the temptation to fire guns loaded and pointed at an enemy.

Our men found some hinderances. There were no breach sights to the guns, but this was remedied by notched sticks in place of them.

Under the heavy cannonade the upper walls were soon in ruins, almost every shot of the enemy which struck them bringing down masses of masonry both outside and inside the fort. At one time a shot struck the ventilator of the magazine, and an explosion seemed imminent.

About ten in the morning a fleet of United States frigates and transports were sighted off the bar. We afterwards learned that they were the *Pawnee*, *Pocahontas*, and the *Powhatan*, with the transport

Baltic, containing provisions and two hundred and fifty recruits for the fort. They had arrived, however, too late to succor us in our need.

Notwithstanding the terrible bombardment of Sumter, only one man received any injury in the fort that day.

There were thirty-three laborers, two cooks, and seven employees of the Engineers' Department in the fort, besides the garrison. Most of the remaining laborers were Irishmen from Baltimore, who were not called upon to take any part in a fight. The excitement was, however, too much for Irish nature, and they soon enthusiastically began serving a gun, cheering and laughing at every successful shot.

As night came on we ceased to work our guns, but the enemy continued firing at intervals during the night. There was anticipation in Sumter that the squadron we had seen off the bar might try to re-enforce and provision us during the night, by using the boats.

The enemy opened fire early the next morning, causing Sergeant Gruff to say, "Poys, they seem to be in a good deal of a hurry." After our meagre breakfast the long roll was beaten, summoning the men to the guns. A shower fell soon after, and the enemy for nearly an hour slackened fire, as if, as Sergeant Gruff said, they were afraid of getting wet. After the rain was over the gentlemen of Charleston resumed pelting us with shot and shell,

and one of the latter set fire to the officers' quarters, inside the grounds. The fire was soon extinguished, but as the block had a wooden roof, floors, and partitions, the hot shot from Fort Moultrie endangered it every moment.

Soon after this a mortar shell burst inside these quarters, and the flames broke out again. The officers began to cut away the woodwork, while the men rolled the powder from the magazine to the casemate, fearing that the hundreds of barrels of powder therein would be ignited by the fire. As fast as we placed them in sheltered positions the barrels were covered with wet blankets. We had removed only about a hundred barrels when the door of the magazine was struck by a shot, and so bent that it could not be opened.

The rebels, meanwhile, apparently seeing the smoke of the conflagration inside the fort, now fired with redoubled fury. It seemed little less than a miracle that the magazine was not exploded by a spark of the fire dropping through the ventilator among the loose powder.

Let the reader imagine the scene at this hour, amid the suffocating, blinding smoke, and the crash of shot and shell.

At last we abandoned all attempts to work, and soon left the interior and sought the embrasures of the fort. Even here the smoke choked and blinded us. The scene in the interior, revealed by occasional glimpses, meanwhile was terrible. Great

tongues of flame whirled and roared and licked up the woodwork of the interior; while black masses of smoke were sucked by the wind into the casemates. Our own shells were exploding in the interior, and the enemy's shells besides.

A change of wind (or perhaps the conflagration was spent) now gave us a little relief. The men once more manned the guns, and hurled a last defiant cannonade at the enemy. It was about noon, and the garrison flag which had been flying up to this time was now shot away: it was nailed to a spar, and raised on the ramparts again.

There was now little left in the interior but blackened walls and smouldering timbers; even the massive wooden gate studded with iron nails had been consumed, and a blackened hole was in its place. The new wall protecting the entrance had crumbled; the towers were battered down; the cast-iron cisterns were smashed, while the sally port and the embrasures were simply black and irregular openings.

I was standing in an embrasure about two o'clock that day when I heard a conversation between one of the men and some one apparently outside.

"What are you doing here?" asked the soldier roughly.

"I wish to see Major Anderson," meekly replied the outsider.

"Surrender, and pass your side arms in here," replied the soldier.

This done, an officer was called.

Our visitor proved to be Senator Wigfall, who mistook the shooting away of the flag for a token of the surrender of the garrison. Later, Roger A. Pryor and ten or twelve other officers came over and settled the terms of our capitulation.

The first battle of the rebellion was over, and the flag of the Republic was down.

That night we slept in the fort, and the next morning, which was Sunday, marched out with the honors of war. A parting salute to the garrison flag was fired. This proved more destructive to our men than the ten thousand shots poured into Sumter by the guns of the enemy. In this salute the premature discharge of a gun killed a private soldier, and the fire dropping from the same gun ignited a shell which exploded and killed five men.

The American flag was lowered from the fortress, and a silken Confederate flag, made by the women of Charleston, raised in its place; also beside it the palmetto flag of South Carolina.

As we embarked on the steamer *Baltic* we found the bay filled with steamers, sailing vessels, boats, and crafts of all kinds, crowded by people who had come down the harbor to witness the humiliation of United States soldiers and the National flag.

CHAPTER VI.

HOME ONCE MORE.

OUR passage to New York was uneventful. We were received with enthusiasm by the soldiers and sailors on board the *Baltic*, who had witnessed the battle from afar off.

Mink accompanied Jed and myself. He had grown lean and dejected from life in Sumter. The noise and excitement of the bombardment had apparently confused and discouraged him. Even a dog gets out of patience after a while with too much noise, the nature of which is incomprehensible to him; although Mink was ordinarily as brave a dog as ever hung his tail half-mast at the sound of a gun.

Upon our arrival in New York, the garrison, to their surprise, were regarded as heroes. Musicians and privates, as well as officers, were interviewed by New York reporters. Most of the latter could describe the fight little better than Corporal O'Keif, who, after talking about everything else, confined his description of the fight to the assertion that it was "a bothering bit of nyse."

The officers, when recognized in the streets of New York, were in danger of seeing themselves

made ludicrous by being carried on men's shoulders. However much elation may be experienced by the performers, the chief personage in such an elevation usually feels cheap and out of place.

The enthusiasm evoked by the stubborn resistance of Sumter, was but the beginning of a National war spirit which in spite of many discouragements grew stronger and stronger until the war closed in the triumph of our arms.

The two months succeeding the fall of Sumter, though so eventful to the nation, were the reverse to Jed and myself. The little garrison, after arriving in New York, was soon depleted by furloughs, discharges, orders for detached service, and also promotion. The term of my service, and also Jed's, was about to expire. Sergeant Gruff had made application to be put on detached duty, the details of which he kept secret from us.

Most soldiers are anxious for a discharge from the army from the time they enlist until the term of enlistment expires, and yet, with singular inconsistency, when they are discharged soon tire of citizen freedom, and go back to military life.

Sergeant Gruff had tried to settle down as a citizen several times, but army routine and habits had become almost a necessity of his existence, and he was always glad to get back to it. Hence he divided the world into two classes, soldiers and citizens, and greatly to the discredit of the latter.

When we asked him once why he didn't leave the

army he replied, "Poys, I've peen made too long to pe mate over."

One evening, while discussing our prospective citizenship, the old sergeant said, "Vat vill you do mit yourselves after you gets a discharge?"

"Go home," answered both Jed and myself in a breath.

"Vat vill you do there?"

I replied, "I shall go to school."

Jed said, "I shall get me a little store, and sell candy and peanuts and such stuff."

"Humph! a sutler," growled Sergeant Gruff with a sneer. "You'd petter come pack and enlist mit your company again."

We finally drew our pay, were mustered out of the service, and were "free and independent" once more.

On the morning in which we were packed and ready for home, Sergeant Gruff made his appearance on the dock, in light marching order, and embarked on the little steamer, *en route* for the city with us. He explained his conduct by saying he had been assigned to recruiting duty in Boston. "My poys," said he, "I keeps my eyes on you, to see dot you ton't fool yourself mit mischief."

Upon our arrival in Boston we were accompanied to the Old Colony depot by Sergeant Gruff, who bade us an affectionate good-by, saying, —

"I come to see you some dime, youngsters. Now ton't go into mischief too far."

As we alighted from the cars at the little village of Centerboro, it was apparently unchanged, as if we had left it but yesterday. We recognized familiar faces in the streets on every side, but no one recognized us.

Jed, accompanied by Mink, went in search of a sister living on another road, while I made my way across the fields to Aunt Temperance's home. I knocked, when she came to the door looking not one day older than when I left her protection. It was some time before she could understand that the strapping young man at her door was the perverse boy who had revolted at her discipline four years before.

Her welcome was as unfeigned and hearty as anything I've ever known. A choking sensation pervaded her speech, and tears came to the eyes of the little woman with the vigorous hugging she gave me. She confided to me that during my absence she had had all sorts of good luck, not the least of which was that a relative had left us, by bequest, several hundred dollars.

That afternoon Jed called at the cottage. When my aunt came to the door and Mink heard her voice he gave one dazed and frightened look, and with a pathetic, reproachful glance over his shoulder at Jed, scampered away with his tail between his legs, as if he would say, "I guess I'll be excused from visiting her again." It was some time before he could be coaxed into the house, so vivid an im-

pression had his last visit there made on him. Aunt Tempy was as much chagrined at this as we were amused.

"You see, ma'am," said Jed respectfully, but with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "we've never talked over coming home with Mink, for fear he would not appreciate its advantages, and he is taken by surprise; besides, he ain't much used to women."

My aunt expressed herself as very much surprised at Jed's manly ways and improved looks, and declared she never knew any one so much benefited by travel, as she termed it.

Jed had not been able to find any of his relatives or friends, and therefore my aunt insisted upon his making his home with us. Her kindness extended even to Mink. A happier woman than Aunt Tempy at her prodigal's return was not to be found in that town.

When it was learned in the neighborhood that we had returned, and had participated in the affair at Sumter, the little house fairly swarmed with visitors.

My aunt fully sympathized with my desire to gain a better education, and tried to persuade Jed, who had steadily grown in her favor, also to take a term at school.

We made arrangements to attend the village academy, and my aunt soon became very proud of the two young men who accompanied her to church, sat in her pew, and whom she introduced to the minister.

Politics and war were at this time the staple of conversation; and Jed and I talked so constantly about Sergeant Gruff, that my aunt asked us to invite him to come to visit us. Hence it soon became the habit of the old sergeant to come Saturday night and stay over Sunday with his "poys." The old soldier admired my aunt very much.

"Py Shorge, poys," he would say, "vat a captain she vould have mate if she had been porn a man!" The neatness of her house and its surroundings, and glimpses of her good sense in management, gave him an exalted opinion of her qualities.

"And dot leetle voman vipped you two strapping poys and a tog, so you vrunned away!" he would say, while he laughed until he was out of breath and tears came to his eyes.

We were studying hard in school when an unexpected event, which we shall chronicle in another chapter, gave a new direction to our thoughts and life.

CHAPTER VII.

MAKING READY.

THE defeat of the Union army at Bull Run, on the 21st of July, 1861, had an effect on the North like the upheaval of an earthquake. The result of the news in our little village was in part grotesque. The whole town, or at least the male portion of it, discussed the battle. On the corners of the streets, over garden walls, and in the mowing field, it was again fought over with a vigor out of proportion to the military knowledge of those who discussed it. It was perhaps well for the country that these village tacticians and strategists mostly found it inconvenient to bring their knowledge to a more bloody field.

"What are we going to du with them seseshers down on the Pot-a-mack?" said Silas Eaton, the shoemaker, to John Warren, a sensible and solid farmer, who was waiting while a pair of shoes were being mended.

"Uncle John," as he was called, was a magnificent old man, and very deliberate of speech. He replied, —

"It appears to me, neighbor Silas, that the first thing for us to do, is to learn this dreadful trade of

war, so as to know it better than the people who would destroy this great Union."

The old man spoke earnestly, and there was a beautiful flush on his grand old face, as if he were inclined, notwithstanding his burden of threescore years, to learn the trade.

"Nonsense!" said Silas. "If that old fellow, General McDowell, hadn't been a right-down traitor, we should have whipped them rebels. Our men fit and fit and fit, and our folks had the best of it tu, until the rebels brought up some new men, and that old McDowell let um do it, tu!"

"There may have been fault," responded Uncle John, "but I find it hard to manage a few men on my farm, so that they will do the work according to my plans. Perhaps General McDowell experienced some such inconvenience with men not learned in the ways of war!"

Silas stopped short with his work, and began with a piece of chalk on a side of sole leather to demonstrate the grand strategy which should have won the battle. He had been reading a popular history of Napoleon, and was full of martial absurdities.

"You see," said Silas, "McDowell should have formed in hollow squares and received 'em on the pints of their bayonets."

"Suppose they didn't want to git on to the ends of them bayonets?" said another inquiringly.

"Plague take you," said Silas angrily. "You throw cold water on to most everything!"

Silas's manner was provokingly confident, as Uncle John stood towering above him, waiting for his shoes. At first Uncle John looked vexed, and then, as if struck with the ludicrousness of the scene, his eyes twinkled humorously as he inquired, "How long did it take you, Silas, to learn your trade?"

"Three years," said Silas, resuming his work, "and I've been learning it ever since and hain't got it learned yet."

"Well," said Uncle John, "it would probably take you as long to learn to fight battles as it did to make and mend shoes."

"I believe my senses, Uncle John, you are a rebel sympathizer!" exclaimed Silas, now thoroughly angry.

This was not an uncommon way, at that time, of meeting arguments which tended to make apparent the fact that the war might be a long one.

Sergeant Gruff, in his occasional visits, was closely questioned by our townspeople. The old soldier was polite, but it was evident to those who knew him well, that his contempt of citizens grew with each interview.

"Dese beople," said the old sergeant, "dink dot soldiers are porn, not mate by study and discipline and drill."

The presence of the sergeant at the grocery gatherings repressed in part the disposition of those there congregated to discuss noisily the mili-

tary situation, but it did not prevent their questioning him. "How long will the war last?" "Why was General McDowell defeated?" and like questions were rapidly propounded.

"I don't know," responded Sergeant Gruff to the last question, "but I dink the men marched too far, and fought too long, for new troops. If they had had a goot reserve to have prought up, they vould not have been opliged to have vrun away."

"Why can't we whip these fellers, the same as General Scott did the Mexicans?" they asked.

"Vy," said the sergeant crisply, "pecause the men dot fight us are shust as goot men as ve are!"

Thus the discussion went on; the habit of national glorification on one hand met the disposition to be practical on the other, and, like two ocean currents meeting, threw the placid waters of ordinary village life into commotion. "Thinking bayonets," "intelligent soldiers," were expressions much in vogue at that time. Citizens did not realize that the superiority of an army to a mob was not in its uniforms and feathers, but in discipline, and the subordination of the many individual wills to one.

The North responded grandly to the call to arms, and "War meetings" and "Flag raisings" were the common means of attesting their patriotism; and whatever may be said against the North, it must always be conceded that it was stimulated more by its defeats than by its victories.

A great people, absorbed in industrial enterprise, interrupted in the pursuits of peace, was impatient that the obstructions of war should be speedily brushed away.

"They are going to raise a company in this town to go to the war," said William Jones, the blacksmith, into whose shop we had dropped on our way from school, "and I'm going to enlist."

A war meeting was called, and speeches were made by the lawyer, the schoolmaster, and the minister. Sergeant Gruff was in the audience, and was called on for a speech. The old sergeant, in his parade coat and polished brasses, looked every inch a soldier, as he faced the audience, and in his broken English said a few earnest, impressive words.

"I have fought for this free government already through one war: war is no pastime; it is hard, bloody, earnest and self-sacrificing work, for one's country. This government is threatened with dismemberment by misguided men, and the nation calls upon her sons to defend her, and restore the Union of States. We must all die once, and it matters not so much when we die, as how we die, and for what we die. We can make this war short only by united action as a people, and by consenting patiently to learn the discipline of soldiers; for discipline is the moral force by which an army exists, and is able to conquer. Discipline gives direction to patriotism and bravery and noble en-

thusiasm, and without the power gained thereby, all is wasted."

This speech, the substance of which we give, made a good impression; and, after a few eloquent but less practical speeches, there was a call for volunteers. A score of men responded by soberly dedicating themselves to their country's service.

The resolution of myself and Jed not to enlist at that time was severely tried, for though we had a natural desire to add our names to those already enrolled, we had promised Sergeant Gruff to consult him before we enlisted. My Aunt Tempy was very patriotic where other people's relations were concerned, but she did not express an equally fervent desire to have me die a soldier's death. So Jed and myself still remained at the Academy.

The day of our enlistment was not to be long postponed. Sergeant Gruff, whose term of service in the regular army had now expired, was mustered out, and, at the very earnest solicitation of the colonel of the regiment being formed, was made captain of a company raised in our village.

As it was common at this stage of the war, to promote men to military positions for their marked popularity rather than their military ability, and as officers often occupied positions which they did not fill, but simply rattled around in, there was a certain flavor of unpopularity in the appointment of Gruff. The service often suffered from similar causes in the months following.

Charles Weston, the son of our village lawyer, had been an applicant for this captaincy; and, although he had neither military knowledge nor experience, he was sore because he had failed in his ambition.

During our stay in camp he was, however, very popular, having the talents of an actor in an eminent degree. He could imitate the gestures, voice, and manner of any village character to perfection, and had also acquired the talent of making-up, to use a theatre phrase, and took, therefore, a prominent part in the camp theatricals with which we occasionally amused ourselves.

The defeat at Bull Run had led to a more careful selection of officers; for that battle proved that, though a man may be a good fellow, he may at the same time prove to be a very poor officer. Besides this, the colonel, who had some military training, had faith in Sergeant Gruff's ability to make good some of his own deficiencies in military knowledge, and thus urged his promotion. The sergeant was far from knowing these facts, or he would not have accepted the position.

It was a wise choice, however, and Sergeant Gruff began at once the thankless work of making soldiers from citizens.

Human nature does not readily adjust itself to the unnatural grooves of military life, and men long accustomed to self-direction do not quickly submit with unquestioning obedience to military exactions

He, however, soon taught his commissioned and under officers the necessity of forming strict military habits, and inspired them with a pride to excel in the manual of arms and in company evolutions.

As he experienced great difficulty in finding among the volunteers, men fit to teach properly the rudiments, such as the manual of arms and the facings, and as he could not attend personally to the task, he constantly called Jed and myself to his assistance as drill-masters of squads, — duties for which we were very well qualified.

We soon became favorites among the young men of the company, and as the consequence of this association felt a great desire to belong to that particular company. So, notwithstanding my aunt's entreaty and Captain Gruff's earnest remonstrance, which was prompted more by a desire to please the "leetle voman" than from any real desire to thwart us, we soon enlisted.

The captain comforted my aunt by saying, "Vell, Miss Tempy, I can take petter care of dem poys dan any von else, and so dey had petter go mit me." As it was evident to her that she could not keep me long at home, and as she had no other motive in influencing Jed than to influence me, she reluctantly consented, saying that she preferred having me go with a good man like Mr. Gruff than with any other. At this compliment Captain Gruff winked, as if my aunt were deluded in regard to his goodness, but that he was willing to

"It was a fine sight to see the old soldier dreamily smoking his pipe." — Page 71.

suffer her favorable opinions rather than contradict her.

The old sergeant was noticeably improved. He spent many of his evenings at my aunt's; sometimes reading from a favorite book, but more often regarding Miss Tempy's deft housekeeping with silent admiration. He attended church with us regularly, and sometimes the weekly prayer-meeting, and completely shunned bar-room associations. It was a fine sight to see the old soldier dreamily smoking his pipe in the afternoon, while Mink lay on his knees asleep, and Jed read the newspaper, and my aunt, in her trim dress and white apron, spread the supper table under the honeysuckles of the wide veranda.

"I tell you," said the old soldier to Jed one evening, on his way to the post-office, "if I vas a younger man and a petter von, and der vas no war, and Miss Temperance was still a single voman" — and here the old soldier blushed to the tip of his nose, and left his conclusion unfinished.

Squire Weston was a neighbor, and a member of the same church we attended. Since my aunt had come into possession of some money, he had advised her regarding its investment, and sometimes visited at the house when Captain Gruff was present. As my aunt was still a young woman and the squire was a widower, the gossip among the neighbors was that the squire would not be adverse to making her Mrs. Weston. Though I doubt if Miss Tempy

ever heard the gossip, or cast a thought in this direction, yet the squire's interest in her material and spiritual welfare seemed constantly on the increase.

The squire was what the villagers termed "forehanded," and one who kept a bright lookout ahead for his worldly chances. Though rumor said he had foreclosed mortgages under circumstances that might be called sharp, yet he was generally esteemed honest, and also a good citizen.

Whether the squire liked to hear himself talk better than the soldier, or whether he disapproved of his conversation, I do not know; but it was observable that when Captain Gruff was holding forth, as he did sometimes, on the duty of able-bodied men to serve their country in her hour of need, the squire would get up and go out, while my aunt was often so intent upon listening to Captain Gruff that a half hour would sometimes elapse before she would notice his absence. The squire said nothing against Captain Gruff, but he said much against the habits of smoking and drinking, and observed that men were seldom of good Christian conduct who had been trained in the army.

My aunt, who regarded Captain Gruff as a model of goodness, and never seemed to think that this talk had a bearing on the old soldier's character, had, previous to my enlistment, used the deacon's ideas to dissuade me from again entering the service.

Once, when she hinted to the old soldier that he might resign and let some younger man take his

place, the captain's cheek flushed as he replied, "Dis country is my country, and neets men of experience to tirect and teach young men to fight its pattles. I have not always been a goot man, but it vould not be prave nor manly to desert my country at dis dime." The old sergeant, who had begun harshly and in anger, now softened his voice as he said, —

"I do not vish you to tink me so mean a man as to serve in dimes of peace, and stays at home ven de war comes and my country neets me. Ah! Miss Tempy, if I vas a petter man" — here he turned away, and left some brooding thought or emotion unuttered. What my aunt's thoughts were I know not, but after this she treated Captain Gruff with even more deference and respect than before.

In a few weeks the regimental organization was completed, and every evening the villagers gathered to see the dress-parade at the encampment near the town.

A few Sundays before the regiment was to leave for the front, our company was invited to attend religious services at the church. The sermon was an eloquent one, and discoursed of the duties of citizens to God and the State. On many this left a good impression, but on none was it so lasting as on Jed, with whom it was destined to be followed by still deeper experiences, which influenced his whole character, and made him a sincere, though not demonstrative, Christian.

After inspection and drill and dress-parade had worn threadbare the thin patience of these early volunteers, they were at last summoned to the front. It was a singular contradiction in human nature, that those most impatient to be called to the front were soon among those most eager to get home again.

All was bustle and confusion when the regiment got its marching orders. There were tears on old faces and young. Mothers said good-by to beardless boys; wives to husbands; sisters to brothers; and the bright, sunny faces of unthinking or of unheeding youth were for the moment clouded and wet with tears, as they said parting words, marched to the cars, and were off to the war.

Many of these young men never returned to their homes, but fell in defence of the nation to which they unselfishly dedicated their lives. Some went down in the front of battle, some died on the march, others in hospitals or in prison.

CHAPTER VIII.

VOLUNTEERS IN WASHINGTON.

ON our route to Washington we received many flattering attentions. Men, women, and children were gathered at the railroad stations, and upon our arrival, as well as departure, we were greeted with cheers, waving of handkerchiefs, and other patriotic demonstrations. Had we eaten all the food pressed upon us we should have never reached Washington alive, but have died of a surfeit or of indigestion, such was the disposition to feast us.

We had taken the boat at New London, *en route* for New York, when I met with an encounter that reads like an invention. I had selected a sleeping-berth, and was fairly in possession and composing myself to sleep, when the curtain was rudely pushed aside, and a familiar voice exclaimed, "And moight I ask who is so koind as to be occupying me berth?"

I astonished the intruder in turn by snatching his hat from his head and exclaiming, "If you don't keep out of here, Corporal O'Keif, I'll drum a tattoo on your head."

"And be George! I never had anything this youngster didn't manage to get into," exclaimed

the corporal, with an evident relish of the situation. At this instant Jed stuck his head out of the berth below mine, and, catching the corporal by the leg, with a shrill whistle, peculiar to himself and familiar to the corporal, exclaimed in droll imitation of O'Keif's tones, "And sure, here's them plaguy byes again!"

The climax was reached when Captain Gruff, awakened by the noise, protruded his head from a neighboring berth, and recognizing the voice of his former subordinate, and forgetting his surroundings, cried out in his sternest tones, —

"O'Keif, go to your quarters, and don't keep dis garrison avake all night mit yer fooling."

The doughty corporal, though surprised at this encounter, was glad to see us again, as we were to meet him in this odd manner.

O'Keif, with many original Irish flourishes, told us that he and others of the 1st Artillery had been campaigning with Patterson's command, in the Shenandoah Valley; and that, as his time of service had expired a month previous, he had been making use of his liberty to visit friends in Connecticut, but was now returning to his old command with the purpose of again re-enlisting. Before we reached New York he was, however, persuaded to take a first sergeant's position in another company of our regiment. Thus were brought together once more some of the *dramatis personæ* of this narrative.

Upon our arrival in New York we marched

through its crowded streets, our measured tread and swaying bodies keeping time to the new and stirring lyric, "John Brown's body lies a mouldering." Enthusiastic cheers, waving flags, and shouts of congratulation and greeting were heard on every side.

"If every man here doesn't feel himself a hero, it isn't because they don't treat him as if he were," said Jed, who "touched elbows" with me.

When arrived at Philadelphia we were feasted at the Cooper Shop Restaurant, and waited on by young ladies who were so attentive to our wants, and so beautiful in their enthusiasm, that we left that hospitable and patriotic city with regret. Though several of our regiment stimulated their enthusiasm artificially, the majority arrived in Washington in good order, notwithstanding the natural and unnatural heat of their patriotism.

We were assigned on our arrival to the cramped and somewhat dirty barracks of the "Soldiers' Retreat," near the Baltimore and Ohio depot.

The city of Washington, at this time in its history, was one of surprising contrasts. The beauty of its public buildings was in striking contrast to the tumble-down, shanty-like appearance of most of its private edifices, and the dirtiness of its sidewalks and streets.

The numerous hogs on duty as scavengers wore a grieved and hopeless look on their elongated faces, as if their duties were too much for them.

A few mornings after this we went into camp near Washington. Here the process of making soldiers from citizens began in earnest. Men accustomed to self-direction did not readily submit to being made over in the military image. Accustomed to working each day for some definite and immediate result, the constant drill and never-ending round of camp duties, so essential to the formation of military habits, seemed to them intolerable foolishness. The necessity of being punctual in all duties was but little appreciated by these raw volunteer soldiers of 1861.

Roll call was at six o'clock, and punishment was meted out for delays. This was followed by the breakfast call a half hour later, where the men were required to form in line with their tin plates and drinking-cups, or, failing therein, go without their breakfast. Why not happen into the cook-house at their own convenience? This seemed a cruel and needless exaction.

If a pass were granted a soldier, he must return before its expiration or be punished. For small offences he did penance in the guard-house, where he sawed wood; or he swept the parade ground under direction of the guard. Our colonel at first punished men by placing them on barrels, where they stood for hours like groups of statuary. At other camps men were to be seen with logs chained to them for breach of discipline. Captain Gruff had remonstrated against such punishments as

unmilitary, and they were abandoned in our regiment.

Passes to visit Washington proved demoralizing, and at Captain Gruff's suggestion were no longer granted to members of our company. This made the captain very unpopular. Disorderly men who had broken rules, and had been punished with inflexible rigor, wrote home heaping abuse on Captain Gruff. Among the loudest of these growlers was Sergeant Weston. He did not take either kindly or naturally to discipline or drill, and though he had been indebted to Captain Gruff for direction and suggestion in the performance of his military duties, yet he did not hate him less, but more, for these favors. The result was that Captain Gruff, like many other strict military men of this period, became unpopular in camp and at home.

As the winter months came on we began to get ready for winter quarters. The sides of our huts were built of logs with A tents for roofs. The chimneys were of sticks cemented with mud, though a flour or pork barrel often in part took the place of the stick chimney. The floor was of clay, pounded level and hard. Two bunks raised from the ground on either side, with a rough table and a few seats, made very comfortable winter quarters. During the construction of these huts, drill and guard duty were omitted.

The drill and discipline of the army at this time were not thrown away as many suppose, but were

the welding force which afterwards enabled the Army of the Potomac to sustain the continued shock of battle, and preserve its morale and efficiency in defeat. It takes time to make an army.

It will be remembered that the newspapers and citizens did not think these preparations needful, and grew impatient at our delay to move on the enemy and end the war!

They inquired impatiently, "Why don't the army move?"

If these interrogating growlers of 1861 and '62 had been marched with a moderate allowance of personal baggage from Washington to Hall's Hill or Fairfax Court-House, they would have speedily got an answer in the glue-like tenacity with which their feet clung to the mud, and the mud clung to their feet. This gulf of Virginia mud between us and the enemy proved a Jericho of strength more effective than all the wooden guns of the intrenchments of Manassas, and which all the rams' horns of the public press and opinion were impotent to overthrow.

O'Keif was a man who had been thoroughly drilled in the regular service, and had acted as drill master therein; yet he fell in the esteem of the company because he was, as they termed it, so fussy; he was constantly adjusting the position of their hands on the muskets, and of their feet, and the position of each man on drill. This unpopularity found echoes at home. One day I received

a letter from my aunt, and as letters similar in spirit were constantly written to men in the army I give herewith a copy.

My dear Dick: — The letters you send to me are gratefully received, and also the money, which I put in the bank for you, my dear boy; I would like to see you so much. Squire Weston has advised me to invest the money I have in Western railroad bonds, though I have not placed it in his hands. He has also advised me to mortgage my little place and put the money in these bonds. It seems a good investment. What do you think about it? It seems to me safe, for the Squire is such a good man, and is certainly a safe adviser. Give my love to Jed and my regards to Captain Gruff. I have sent you a box of good things to eat, and Mary Weston has put in a needle-book and a Testament for Jed.

Your affectionate aunt,

Temperance Nickerson.

P. S. — Please tell Lieutenant Weston that his Aunt Lydia says get some camphire for his headaches and stomach. I hope you get enough to eat. Is it true that Captain Gruff drinks lager beer, as they say he does here?

T. N.

P. S. — I hope it is not true that Captain Gruff swears at the men of his company, or that he is very hard and tyrannical with them, as it is rumored here he is.

Your aunt,

T. N.

P. S. — Why don't the army go over to Richmond and take the rebels prisoners and end the war? Don't eat the cheese all up at one time. I have put into the box some tobacco for Captain Gruff's pipe. I hope it won't get into the butter or the frosted cake.

Yours,

T. N.

Mary Weston of whom my aunt wrote was the belle of the village, and both Jed and I had paid her some attention while at home. I read this letter of my aunt's to Captain Gruff, and he turned red with rage and exclaimed, —

"Dot leetle voman vill lose all her money, foolin' it into the hands of that bald-heated old squire. I shall writes her some tings myself." What he wrote I did not know, but suspect he told her bluntly his suspicions; and he must have spoken very plainly, as Gruff had a soldier's directness, and was never inclined to mince matters.

My aunt did not answer his letter, which was her way of saying nothing she needed to mend, and at the same time showing her displeasure.

The army encamped around Washington in the winter and spring of 1862 was now about to move. General Banks had crossed the Potomac into Virginia by the way of Harper's Ferry. And the Army of the Potomac had boldly marched through thick and thin of mud to Manassas; and then, finding the enemy had abandoned his defences there, marched back to Washington again, covered with more mud than glory.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE PENINSULA.

THE Army of the Potomac was at last ready to make a decisive movement against the enemy. Huge steamers, tugs, and sailing vessels, barges, and even canal boats, thronged the adjacent waters of Washington and Alexandria. Marching orders came at last, and, leaving our comfortable winter quarters regretfully, we marched through Washington and embarked on a steamer. We dropped down the Potomac, and the spires and domes of Washington and Alexandria soon faded away in the blue haze of the early morning light.

The little steamer throbbed its way down the river into Chesapeake Bay, and on the afternoon of the second day our regiment landed at Fort Monroe, on old Point Comfort, at the western point of that peninsula formed by the York and James rivers. This was the first step of the army in what is called the Peninsula campaign, and its conveyance by water to this place, over two hundred miles from Washington, was an enterprise of such colossal magnitude that a foreign critic has called it "the step of a giant."

This vast army and its material can scarcely be

conceived of by the boys of this generation, for an army is composed not only of its fighting men, but of thousands of others. There are orderlies, officers' servants, cooks, drivers of baggage wagons and trains, besides telegraph mechanics and apparatus, blacksmiths, saddlers, farriers, and pontooniers or bridge-builders, and engineers. Hundreds of tons of gunpowder, shot, shell, and cartridges, as well as huge siege guns, trains of forty-four batteries, trains of ambulances, telegraph trains, bridge trains, baggage trains, and, above all, trains of food for the subsistence of the army. The animals alone for this army were nearly fifteen thousand in number, which shows something of its magnitude, and the enormous equipage required by it.

A military writer says that an army, like a serpent, moves only on its belly. This is but a quaint way of saying that an army can exist and advance upon an enemy only as it has the means of feeding itself. Whatever, therefore, stops or delays this food supply endangers or destroys an army. Hence to keep open its base of supplies in protecting the road to it, so the enemy cannot reach it, complicates all its operations. An army, cut off by the enemy from its base of supplies, is like a man trying to eat while his throat is in the grip of an enemy.

Such was the condition of Lee's army before Richmond, when Grant seized the last railroad communicating with its supplies, and such was the condition of the army under Lord Cornwallis when it sur-

rendered at Yorktown, on the same peninsula which we were about to invade.

Keeping open its lines of communication for the feeding of an army while operating before an enemy is, therefore, an all-important consideration for its commander.

It was the material and food for the Army of the Potomac which was being landed at Old Point Comfort, the western terminus of that peninsula, fifty miles in length, which this vast army was to travel.

It was a scene of seeming confusion, but of real order, and every movement was planned by a master-hand. Our company crossed a bridge near where this landing was taking place, and then, passing the chimney stacks and blackened remains of the village of Hampton, took up its quarters in an open field beyond.

Our first procedure was to pitch our tents. This was done by buttoning together four or more squares of canvas about a yard and a half wide, one of which was carried by each infantry soldier. This canvas shanty was often used as a roof over side walls of sod or clay, or, as at this time, pieces of rails, with mud plastered over the crevices, and earth heaped against the outside. Here four or five, according to the number who contributed each a square of this tent, made their abiding-place in the field. This was distinguished from the A tent used by soldiers at more permanent

camping-places by being sarcastically called a dog-tent. At first the soldiers felt as if they were treated like dogs in having to use them, but their convenience proved so great as to cause them to be put into general use in future campaigns.

When this part of our work had been attended to, we proceeded to cook breakfast. Our haversacks, made of canvas, were shaped like large letter envelopes, about sixteen inches square, and were suspended from the shoulders by a band. At this time mine contained a tin plate, a knife and fork, a piece of pork, about twenty squares of hard bread, some sugar and ground coffee mixed together; also a little salt and pepper in a paper. On the outside of the haversack was fastened, by its strap, a tin quart cup used for drinking or for cooking coffee. Occasionally a canteen would be used for carrying molasses, but this was usually the receptacle for coffee or water. From these haversacks were taken the ingredients for a breakfast. Osgood (the company cook when in more permanent camps), Sutherland, a young fellow of seventeen, Jed, and myself, formed our squares into a tent, and then proceeded to cook breakfast. First, making a fire of fence-rails, without troubling ourselves to cut them, we soaked our hard bread in water, and then, frying our pork in a small frying-pan, put the soaked hard bread into this pan, and added a little molasses to give it a flavor, as Osgood said. This concoction was called

by some "son of a gun," and by others a name more sulphureous.

While this was being done, our coffee was put in position to be cooked. The long-extending rails with which our fire was made, resembled a grand-father-long-legs (with the fire and frying-pan for his body). This extension of material caused us a mishap which nearly cost us our breakfast.

Jed was bringing fuel, when some one shouted, "Jed, Jed!" whereupon he turned, and his rails, coming in contact with several heads, levelled them to the ground. One of these victims, in dodging further damages, stumbled against the ends of the burning rails, overturned our coffee, and seriously disturbed our frying-pan and fire.

The breakfast being cooked it was distributed in our four tin plates, and was eaten while we were seated on our rubber blankets. It is almost needless to say, many more pretentious meals are eaten with less relish than was ours. Hundreds of men around us were similarly engaged. Here one, more hungry than particular, held slices of pork over the fire, on a sharpened stick or the rammer of his gun, until the pork was shrivelled and blackened, and then ate it with his hard-tack and coffee. Others made a still more simple morning meal of hard-tack, between two squares of which was a slice of raw pork, perhaps deluged with molasses.

After breakfast came guard mounting, and the consequent grumbling of men assigned to that duty; in the evening dress parade, rather informal (at which white gloves were superfluous); and roll call. The parade was formed and dismissed. Taps; and all sounds in camp were suppressed, and the army of over a hundred thousand men slept to the measured tread of its sentinels, the call of its grand rounds, and the angry protest of its miles of hungry mules.

On the morrow we begin the march up the Peninsula, with green grass beneath our feet, the sky clear, and the balm of spring in the air. The march of an army is apparently an inextricable confusion. The order is route step, and the arms are carried at will. The baggage wagons, pontoon trains, and artillery seem thoroughly mixed with the infantry and mud.

We had not marched far before the hitherto cloudless sky was overspread with clouds, the rain began to fall, the soil became more and more like hasty-pudding in its consistency, and worrying in its suction and stickiness. The marching soldiers were drenched with rain, and wearily trod Virginia mud, with, as Jed expressed it, more prospect of reaching bottom than of reaching their destination.

At last the huge army was brought to a halt before a cordon of earthworks formed across the Peninsula. Our camp was pitched on a plateau of the

York River, with a little creek in our front. The enemy's works at Gloucester Point were on the opposite side of the river, and the Yorktown batteries fronted us. This same spot was the scene of Cornwallis's surrender, Oct. 19, 1781.

A group had gathered around our fire of rails, in the mud back of a little hillock, near a peach orchard. Several little fires were added together in the unit of a bivouac. A party was sent with pack-mules to Shipping Point for rations, of which we were nearly destitute. The group was lit up by the ruddy fire framed by the outside darkness. Jed was extended at full length on his rubber blanket, face down, with elbows resting on the ground and hands supporting his face. Captain Gruff, who was a casual visitor, occupied the seat of honor on our only cracker-box, the contents of which had been eaten for breakfast. He was smoking his pipe with great gravity and deliberation. His huge mustache was twisted and pointed with unusual severity, and there was a shadow on his face beyond that which was cast by his overhanging rugged brows.

"Are we going to have a fight, Captain Gruff?" inquired young Sutherland.

The captain smoked his pipe reflectively, and then, taking the long stem from his mouth, made a gesture towards the enemy's works with it and said, "Ah, dot Magruter is a sly tog. I served unter him vonce, and he had a great vay of pouncing

upon us at grand vrounts. A sly tog. Ve can't tell vat Magruter vill do." Resuming his pipe he shook his head ominously; while, gazing into the fire in an abstracted manner, he occasionally glanced at Jed.

While the boys chatted and laughed, the old soldier sat in the same absent manner, with clouds of gloom gathering deeper and deeper on his brow. Finally, rising and knocking the ashes from his pipe, he said, touching Jed on the shoulder, and with a look of something like tenderness which always came to his face when he addressed him, "Jed, my poy, I have some vords mit you. Come." Jed arose from his place by the fire, and, arm in arm, the old man with the boy whom he loved walked to the captain's quarters.

"I wonder what the old captain wants of Jed,' said Sutherland.

I replied that I thought Gruff had the blues, and as he was very fond of Jed he wanted his company to drive them away.

In a few minutes a step was heard, and Jed resumed his place in the circle.

"What did the captain want?"

"Oh," said Jed laughingly, "he gave me this pair of stockings, and told me not to go to sleep on the wind'ard side of a fire, and all that, you know."

Lights were ordered out (for drums were not allowed to be beaten while we were before York

town), and, lying under our frail shelter-tents, we were soon sound asleep.

Here let me digress, to say that one characteristic of the army was its mules, and that of the fifteen thousand animals of the army at least twelve thousand were these raw, unsubdued hybrids, on whom military life had left no further impress than slightly to break them to harness.

The mule, perhaps, illustrates the principle of natural selection, for no other animal has his dogged persistency of life and endurance of hardship. While he was considered a valuable factor in the Union army, he was not an agreeable one; for when he was expected to go he would stop, and when his feet should have been on the firm earth they were often found in lively conflict with the air, describing, with the help of his tail (which often took the character of an aerial paint-brush), his surplus of waywardness.

If there is one who reads these pages who has never heard the hungry hallelujah of an army mule at midnight, he has missed the most wonderful violation of musical rules that exists in nature. It was this sound that had awakened me during the night. A mule had set up his hungry plaint, and then a line of two or three miles of his comrades were seemingly convulsed in an effort to surpass his performance. My first thought on awakening was that the roof of the sky had been kicked out, or that the stars were shattered

and a portion of the universe was falling through space.

"What an awful noise those mules make. Jed! I say, Jed! listen to those mules."

No answer.

Again I called, "I say, Jed!" when Osgood and Sutherland both awoke.

"Where is Jed?"

"Don't know," sleepily replied Osgood, with a yawn, while Sutherland said quizzically, "What's the matter with them ar mules?"

"Guess the knots in the pontoon boats they're eating don't agree with them," replied Osgood, with another yawn.

While awaiting Jed's return I fell asleep, and was aroused by the morning sun shining in my face.

"Where is Jed?" I again inquired.

"I haven't seen him this morning. Hallo! neither his musket, knapsack, nor haversack is here," said Sutherland.

At roll call Jed did not answer to his name. "Private Jedediah Hoskins, absent without leave," was put upon the morning report of the company. I approached the old captain and said, "What has become of Jed?"

The old man shook his head, and, without reply, walked off with a deeper gloom on his face than I had ever seen there before.

The day passed, and Jed did not report for duty,

nor return to explain his mysterious absence. Then rumor, attempting to fill in the blank of mystery, said he had deserted.

I went again to Captain Gruff's quarters. He was writing up his reports, with two cracker-boxes for a desk.

"They say in the company that Jed has deserted, captain."

The old man's red weatherbeaten face turned literally white, his goatee worked convulsively for a moment, but he made no reply. Looking up after a moment he said, sharply, as if in defiance, —

"Corporal Nickerson, vat you vish to say?"

"I wish to know where Private Hoskins is," I replied, assuming the position of attention, and the tone of a subordinate before his superior.

The old soldier, with more kindness in his tones, replied, "Don't vorry, my poy, about Jed. I don't dink he has teserted." And then, with a tremor in his voice, added, "His absence gives me much pain. I can't say vare he is. Go to your quarters, my poy; go to your quarters."

In spite of his self-control and sternness, a fugitive tear rolled down the old man's nose, and splashed the paper on which he was writing. He was apparently much troubled. Did *he* believe Jed had deserted?

Jed's absence was for a few days the talk of the camp. The theory that he had deserted gained credence in the absence of any other reasonable one,

but, knowing his stanch patriotism, I could not believe it.

"Used to 'sociate with them rebs too much down in South Carolina, I guess," said one. Still, with all the gossip and guesses, the mystery remained unsolved.

CHAPTER X.

BEFORE YORKTOWN.

"THERE'S a hole big enough to bury two or three of ye," said a joker, belonging to a party that we relieved in the work of digging rifle-pits shortly after our arrival.

"What made that?" curiously inquired one of our number.

"Oh, a visitor who came from over there," replied the joker, pointing towards the enemy's works.

Just then a flash and a puff of smoke were seen on the mud heaps, as we called the enemy's works. After a short interval, the sound of a heavy gun was heard (as light travels faster than sound), and then, hoarsely sputtering and hissing, *yurn-yurn-chug* came a shell, making a similar hole in the earth, and spattering the soil over us. Our boys called the missile a nail-keg, then a camp-kettle. It *was* about the size of these objects, but much more solid. We soon became accustomed to them, and found that, by watching, we could see them in the air, and that the noise they made was often more terrible than the execution they did.

Over a hundred thousand men of the Union Army were now encamped before the enemy's

works at Yorktown. Here, where a skirmish or a sortie might at any hour bring on a battle, the children of the same men that conquered Cornwallis were arrayed in deadly enmity against each other.

The land here rises from the York River in a bluff, and forms a level plain in front of Yorktown. The enemy's works before us consisted of high earthworks, with wide deep ditches, the whole surmounted by cannon. From our position we could see them, in what appeared to be a continuous ridge of yellow earth, stretching along our front. In reality they consisted of an intricate network of forts, connected by breastworks, and built under the supervision of accomplished engineers.

It rained almost continuously, and the miry, sticky soil in our front was but little adapted for the rapid movements of artillery or troops, so essential to an assault.

A number of small streams ran across our front, between us and the enemy. These were soon bridged, and roads leading to them built, through gulfs of mud, with trees cut the width of the roadways laid closely together. This had to be done; for, otherwise, there seemed no bottom to the mud. This was called corduroying the roads; a labor the Army of the Potomac assumed wherever it advanced in Virginia, and this in part was a compensation to the country for the fences we burned.

The fires of an army will eat up an astonishing number of rails, and the soldiers thought themselves

fortunate in the fact that Southerners had made such lavish use of them in building their fences.

All along our front our men were seen marching through the rain with shovels and picks, to dig intrenchments. Heaps of mud were soon piled up in our front, under the supervision of the engineers. During the day, zigzag earthworks, in places exposed to the fire from the enemy, were advanced towards them in such a way that the soldiers at work would not be exposed to danger. At night these were connected by lines of mud heaps running parallel with the enemy's works.

To one not acquainted with the nature of their work, they would appear to be digging wide and shallow ditches rather than breastworks. In this manner rifle-pits four or five feet deep, and extending miles in length, rose on our front and gradually approached to the enemy's works.

In this task we sometimes unearthed corroded shot, lodged here eighty years before, during the Revolution.

Our rifle-pits farthest in advance were less intricate than those just in the rear of them, whereon were mounted our heavy artillery, and where magazines and bomb-proofs and traverses were constructed. The first were intended to shield infantry formed for assault; while from the second, cannonades were to silence the enemy's guns, and drive them if possible from their works.

Whatever may be said of the failure of the com-

manding general to attack at this time, before these offensive works were erected, it must be acknowledged that similar attacks on fortified positions, without such precautions, had been failures, and often resulted disastrously to those making them.

In these operations our company bore a conspicuous part, as Captain Gruff was an accomplished engineer, and had the confidence of the general commanding the corps.

Jed's absence still remained a mystery, and the old captain, when questioned, simply shook his head and replied, "Dere's a great many curious tings in var, my poy."

During this time the enemy kept up an occasional fire with their heavy guns, principally directed at our working squads, the gunboats on the river, or our canal boats at the mouth of the creek. Sometimes they attempted to fire at the balloon which was sent up for the purpose of reconnoitring their lines, and which was usually kept in a little depression of ground, in front of our camp. An annoying fire came also at times from their sharpshooters and pickets.

We took our turn at picket duty, and most soldiers liked this, notwithstanding its greater dangers, better than work with pickaxe and spade. Our pickets were established just beyond a wood, in an open field, where we had thrown up a slight line of soil not over three feet high, behind which

we lay during the day, watching a similar line of mud near us, in our front.

One night it was raining, and the advance pickets were very uncomfortable.

"It rains all the time in this infernal country," growled one of our men.

"Well, I'm going to have a smoke, anyway," said Osgood, lighting a match on the dry part of his trousers.

He was just applying the match to his pipe when "crack," went a rifle from the enemy near us, and the bowl and stem of his pipe were shivered in his hand.

"Great gracious! where's that fellow?" said Osgood.

"I saw the flash of that musket way up there," said another soldier, pointing towards the sky.

"He must be precious near us," growled Osgood from behind the mud heap, where he had taken shelter.

The experiment of lighting another match was tried, when "crack," came another report, and a bullet hissed unpleasantly near us. In the morning the mystery was solved. Near our line, perhaps fifty yards distant, was the chimney-stack of a ruined house. A rebel sharpshooter had climbed up this chimney, and, knocking out a brick for a loophole, had begun making us uncomfortable in a very persevering manner.

One of our men was wounded while getting to

his feet from the ground, and as we lay hugging the earth before the low ridge of soil used for protection, we debated what was best to do.

Every time we showed any part of our persons above this ridge, "*ping!*" came a bullet near our heads. If we fired at the chimney-stack, the sharp report of that rebel rifle, and a thin line of blue smoke, warned us to be careful.

"He's got the start of us, and no mistake," said "Long John Haskell," our orderly sergeant.

"We've got to wait here till night, or two or three of us will be shot, and I've got only two hard-tack for rations," said another.

Captain Gruff, who was with us, viewed the situation at first with his usual phlegmatic complacency, but finally got angry, for he could not lie very flat, and this didn't agree with his ideas of military dignity. His face was settling down into an ominous frown, when it suddenly lit up, as if a happy solution of our difficulty had occurred to him.

"Mens, now mind vat I say. Dick," addressing me, "stick your cap on your ramvrod, shust so, and stick it up a leetle vays." (Here he illustrated by holding his cap a little above the parapet, and "*ping!*" came a minie bullet through it.) "Dere, Dick; and ven dot rebel shoots next dime all you mens runs to that schimney shust as fast as you can, and surround it."

All being ready, the cap was stuck up on a ram-

"Stick your cap on your ramvrod, shust so, and stick it up a leetle vays." — Page 100.

rod, the rebel fired, and we made a rush upon the chimney-stack. We were then too near for him to fire down upon us. We called upon him to surrender, to which the only reply was a surly refusal. Shot after shot was fired up the chimney, until down tumbled the sharpshooter, dead, with a shot which had struck the lower jaw and passed through the head upwards. We were relieved from picket shortly afterwards, and the incident became the talk of the army.

Just as we reached the woods skirting the plain on which the scene took place, we met one of our sharpshooters, a Californian, with a heavy telescopic rifle, and to him we told the occurrence.

"What kind of a rifle did that reb have?" he inquired.

One of the men had brought the rifle along with us, and my attention was now directed to it for the first time.

"It's one of our improved Springfield rifles, and no mistake," said the Californian.

Captain Gruff and myself had discovered another surprising fact. It was Jed's rifle. His initials were marked in ink on the but. That night my heart was heavy at the thought of Jed's possible fate.

In the morning I met Captain Gruff, and said, "That was Jed's rifle we captured yesterday."

"Yes," assented the old man.

"I rubbed his initials off with my coat," said I.

With a steadfast gaze into my face, he said, "I dells you something, my poy;" and then, laying his hand kindly on my shoulder, added, "Jed is all vright." Then, hesitating a moment, as if afraid to trust himself to speak further, he abruptly walked away.

The finding of the rifle in the possession of the rebel sharpshooter had not cleared up the mystery of Jed's absence. There was constant reference made in the company to his disappearance. Sergeant Weston, who did not like Jed, and took every occasion to prejudice his comrades against him, said one afternoon, while we were eating our badly cooked rice and pork, "I knew Hoskins would turn out badly. It's in the breed. His father was as straight as a string, and belonged to the church, at one time. Then he took to drink" —

Here a hand on Weston's throat caused him to stop and gasp. It was Captain Gruff, who had come upon the group, and thus emphasized his disapproval. As he relaxed his grasp around the sergeant's throat he said, with an angry frown, "You ton't know vat you are talking about, you fool, you!"

Meanwhile, the working details still labored in the trenches, until we drew so near the enemy that there was but a very short distance between our pickets. By a tacit understanding, at least at our part of the picket line, firing had in part ceased.

We were lying behind our mud heap, keeping watch over a similar earthwork, when a voice from "a string of mud" said, —

"I say, Yanks!"

"What is it, Johnnie?" inquired we.

"I'll allow we'd like to stretch our legs over this side, and if you'll give us a chance we'll give you one."

"All right, rebs! Fair play now! No shooting!" and so we got to our feet, and began stretching our legs, to get the cramp and rheumatism out of them and our backs.

"Got any coffee to trade for backer, Yanks?" queried a reb.

"No, we are all out," we replied.

"I thought you Yanks had a powerful lot of it.

A fellow came over here two weeks ago, toting all his traps with him, and he had a right smart of coffee."

"Deserted?" asked we.

"Yes, he knew a heap of South Carolina people."

"What regiment?" we asked.

"Well, I reckon he belonged to your regiment; said he was tired and sick of yer dogoned onerary army, anyway. He was a right peart fellow; said his captain hadn't been good to him."

Here Captain Gruff came up with another officer, who proved to be of higher rank.

Our men eagerly related the conversation.

"Do you think it was Private Hoskins?" inquired one.

"No," said Captain Gruff: "that poy lofes me, and lofes his country; he vould nefer say I hadn't been goot to him."

After arriving in camp I went to the captain again, as I had a suspicion that he could set my fears at rest regarding Jed.

"Vat you wish to say?" was his crisp interrogation.

"I wish to learn if you know where Private Hoskins is?" I replied, assuming the attitude and language of a subordinate addressing a superior officer.

The old soldier, with more kindness in his tones than was usual, replied, "I can't say vare he is, my poy."

But in spite of his self-control he was evidently much troubled. Had Jed then really deserted?

The theory of his desertion was talked over, but no definite conclusion was arrived at, and the query "Where is Jed?" remained for a time unanswered, and to some suspicious souls the matter was never satisfactorily explained.

It was now the first of May. We were on engineer detail, and during the day the enemy had been unusually active. They had fired their artillery often, and our hundred-pound guns, near the York River, had replied for the first time that day.

All our guns were now ready to open an encir-

cling and destructive fire on the Confederate works.

During the night a fire seemed to have broken out inside the rebel lines. Before daylight they began rapidly firing from their heavy guns. At sunrise the picket on our front reported that the pickets of the enemy had been withdrawn, and a shout went up all along the ranks at the intelligence. Men were hurried into line and were soon on the march after the retreating enemy.

CHAPTER XI.

PURSUIT AND BATTLE.

IT was the 7th of May, when the Army of the Potomac moved out in pursuit of the foe. The eagerness of huntsmen shone in their faces, for many in our ranks believed that they had their enemy "on the run" and were about to end the war with one sharp and decisive conflict.

There was much apparent confusion. Back near their old camping-ground, artillery men were trying to move heavy siege guns over the miry roads. These were at last abandoned, with their huge muzzles pointing skyward like telescopes as if exploring in that direction for firmer roads.

Drivers of mules and horses attached to artillery, baggage trains, ambulances, and pontoons, were shouting and flourishing whips, and with fierce imprecations urging forward their unwilling beasts. Mules with feet braced firmly in the direction opposite that in which they were required to advance, maintained a masterly passiveness.

Contradictory orders had halted a division in the road, over which another had orders to advance. Torpedoes buried in front of the enemy's works were exploded by marching columns, killing sev-

eral horses and men. In consequence of these explosions, exclamations of warning were heard on every side. "Do you see that stick?" "Don't touch that hat, there's a string tied to it with a torpedo on the end!" Our brigade led the advance, marching at route step, and carrying their arms at will. We were frequently halted for rest. Clouds began to overspread the sky with the darkness of an approaching storm. We had advanced over our route three or four miles when we were met by hatless and dismounted cavalrymen.

"Halt! where are you going?" cried Captain Gruff.

"For re-enforcements; the rebs are thicker than hornets four or five miles back there."

"Vell, vat did you comes pack for, den?" said Captain Gruff sternly.

"Why, we rode right in among them before we knew it! It was *pop*, *pop*, *pop*, and then we lost our horses and skedaddled; there wan't anything to stay for. Guess we'll go back with yer and see the fun, though."

The spokesman was a six-footer who proved to be an ex-lumberman from Maine, whom his comrades, in derision of his size, called "Sonny." The squad, after a few minutes' conversation with our captain, fell in line and marched forward with our command.

Overcome with fatigue, we were halted late that night near the roadside, and lay down in our blan-

kets to sleep. A heavy rain came on during the night to increase our discomfort. The rain had also increased the weight of our clothing and knapsacks, and cooled our ardor for the chase.

The road over which we now advanced had been cut through a dense wood which deepened the gloom. "The rebs are just ahead there," said the tall cavalryman, who acted as guide. As we closed up our column and advanced without encountering them, we began to say, "Guess they won't wait." "Got business in Richmond." "They are like the bird that wouldn't wait while the paralyzing salt was put on its tail," when the quick *crack*, *crack* of musketry ahead showed that our skirmishers had already encountered those of the enemy. Cooks, sutlers, chaplains, and officers' horses were speedily sent to the rear, and the brigade was drawn up in line of battle.

There was a mass of felled timber encumbering an open plain half a mile wide on our front. Beyond this we could distinguish dimly through the pouring rain, the yellow mud heaps of the enemy's earthworks. The rain ceased for a while, and we could plainly see Fort Magruder before us.

"There's a white flag on that fort," said one of our men. Captain Gruff gravely examined it through his field-glass and said, —

"Dot is a faded out flag, not a vite flag of truce."

"In other words, their colors run," jocosely said

the colonel, who had also been examining them through his glass.

The enemy's heavy guns opened fire on our lines, and their shot ploughed up the ground and crashed among the fallen trees in our front, and cut away the branches of the trees in the wood, on the edge of which we were aligned. We were deployed near the Hampton road commanded by the guns of Fort Magruder. The mist and rain prevented the Confederate artillery from getting our position for a while, when the rattle of a battery's wheels gave them our range. *Whiz! bang! chug!* came shot and shell with deadly precision, striking the guns, killing some of the gunners, and driving others from their places. Volunteers soon manned these pieces again, and the guns of the fort were for a time silenced.

While here in line, during an ominous silence, we could see large bodies of the enemy's infantry stealthily advancing through the ravines which traversed the plain on our front. Our lines were weakened by sending a large part of our force to support our left, menaced by this movement of the enemy.

The Confederates shortly after made an attack, and four pieces of our artillery which were without infantry support were captured. The Confederates, with the long-drawn-out "*Yi, yi, y-i-i-i,*" were advancing! Captain Gruff, whom the men had always thought needlessly fussy, right dressed our

company amid the yell of the enemy and the hum of bullets, with the same minute care as if on drill or dress parade.

"By heavens!" said one of our men admiringly, "the old captain don't mind bullets."

"He seems to like 'em," said a second.

We were advanced in line while the enemy came on, and shot began to strike around us like the pattering of raindrops among forest leaves. The sharp *ping* and *zip* of the round and minie bullets whispered death to our ranks. If anything will take the military starch out of a man, it is rain and mud during a fight.

Near me, as we advanced, was the tall cavalryman I've mentioned as "Sonny," and following behind him, trailing his musket, was a little thin fellow not over eighteen years old, loudly crying.

"What are you crying about?" gruffly asked Sonny, in tones so deep that they seemed to come from his coat-tails.

"My knees are weak, and I'm scared," was answered, in a piping treble voice.

"Who in thunder ain't?" said Sonny, in his most tremendous bass.

Our boys laughed full as loudly as they would had they not recognized the truth of the assumption.

We were halted again, right dressed, and opened fire; the rattle of ramrods in muskets, and the steady roll of musketry, had a curious sound when combined. Our men began to fall. One of our

men who was shot, before falling, sighted and fired his musket, then fell dead at our feet.

Above the din was heard the voice of Captain Gruff from his place in the rear, saying, "Steady, mens! Steady!" Wounded men fell out of the line, or were carried away. We were outnumbered, and began to give ground. The colonel and adjutant were wounded, and Captain Gruff, in virtue of seniority of rank, assumed command. He halted and aligned the men, and coolly walked in front of them while the rebels came on.

We were out of ammunition, and a squad had been detailed to take it from the cartridge-boxes of our dead and wounded.

Bayonets were fixed to repel a possible charge. Many of our officers were killed and wounded in the brigade, and the men were getting disheartened and began to fall back. Captain Gruff was reforming them, when an officer on a white horse stopped in their midst, and said, in an indescribable tone of command and coolness, "Men, you must hold your ground."

The men recognized their commander, General Hooker, and with a cheer faced towards the enemy, while Captain Gruff aligned them once more. The general watched this proceeding under a heavy fire from musketry and artillery, then, nodding towards Captain Gruff, said to an aid, "That's a cool old soldier," and rode away down the left of the line.

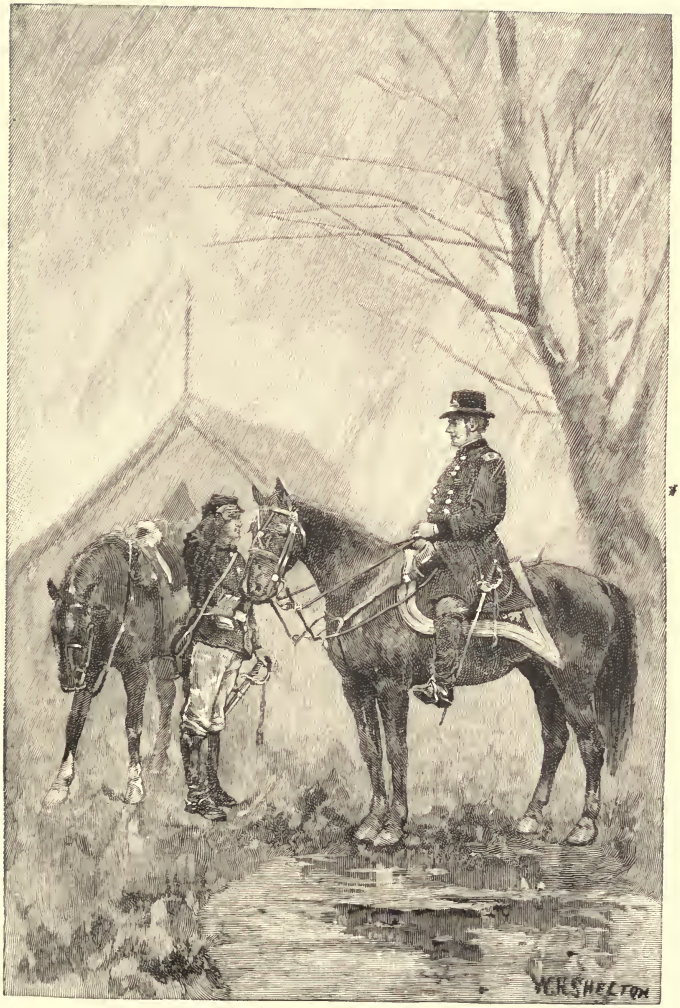
There now succeeded a lull in the conflict.

"Hist! there's a line of men moving near us," said Orderly John in a whisper. Through an opening in the branches near we could see a party of men stealthily moving parallel to our own force, trailing their arms. Our men instinctively brought their muskets to an aim. "Don't fire. They've got on blue overcoats. They are some of our own men."

"Ready! Don't you see their gray hats?" said Captain Gruff, in an undertone.

"There's a white flag," said a lieutenant; and he sprang forward with hand extended to receive it, when he was shot dead.

"Fire!" came the command, and a line of fire sprang from the muzzles of our muskets with deadly effect. In an instant, before the blue smoke of this volley had drifted away, an exclamation of "See that man on horseback!" was heard. I looked, and saw the man in the gray uniform of a Confederate officer, not half a dozen yards from us, riding towards our line with a white handkerchief on a sword. There was something indescribably familiar in his form and manner. A dozen muskets were brought to a deadly aim, when Captain Gruff beat down their muskets with his sword, and then, turning, advanced to meet the horseman. An exclamation of astonishment broke from his lips as the officer handed him a packet, spoke a few words in an undertone, and rode away towards the enemy again.



"General Hooker was sitting on his horse in the rain."
—Page 113.

"Corporal Nickerson," cried the captain, with apparent agitation.

"Here, sir," I responded, stepping out from the line.

"Take this packet at once to General Hooker, down the left. It's very important."

A horse was brought up, which I mounted, and rode down the left of the line. I found General Hooker, and as I handed him the packet I glanced at the writing on it. It was Jed's handwriting. At once there came to me the conviction that the officer who rode to our lines in the face of so much danger was Jed.

General Hooker was sitting on his horse in the rain. He hastily scanned the contents of the packet, thrust one of the papers into his pocket, wrote a few words on one of the folded papers, and, glancing at me, said, "I have no orderly or staff officer present that I can spare. Please take these papers to General McClellan."

I was about to start when he said, "Wait," then, scrawling a few lines, handed me a pass. It read, "Pass bearer with important despatches to General McClellan's Hd. Qurs. — Jos. Hooker, Brig.-Gen."

At last, after an hour's ride over the muddy road and through the rain, I found General McClellan's headquarters. I saluted a young-looking man, undersized, with a reddish beard and sandy hair, seated at a pine table. It was McClellan. He

took the package from my hand, and was soon profoundly absorbed in its contents. I could see that some of the papers were maps or plans. He finished reading them, then looked up and began questioning me as to how they came to be in my possession. I described the scene I have already given to the reader. "Well done!" he ejaculated. Just then a thin old man of foreign aspect came in, whom I recognized as the Prince de Joinville, at that time on McClellan's staff. He conversed in French with the general a few minutes, then, turning to the table, wrote me a pass and said, "Return to General Hooker, and, with my compliments, give him this letter. Wait a moment;" then, calling to an orderly, said, "Give this man some hot coffee."

I was soon ready for the saddle, and the strong horse I rode took me speedily to the front. I was conducted to General Hooker. The general looked over the note, and turning to a one-armed officer at his side said impatiently, "General McClellan can't understand that we are fighting a battle and not a skirmish." Then wheeling his horse, and saying to the one-armed officer, "There comes the head of your column," rode down the line, — the manliest and most soldierly figure I ever saw on a field of battle.

I reported to Captain Gruff again, and found the regiment just retiring to the woods behind a line of fresh men which had arrived as re-enforcements.

In a moment there was a continuous roar of musketry, and the heavy boom of cannon in our front. "Just listen to that," exclaimed Sutherland, "Kearney's men are going in!" In a few moments we heard a cheer which showed that the enemy were falling back and that the Union advance was successful.

After the fighting was over, the bands came up and began playing patriotic airs. Hancock had meanwhile flanked the enemy's position, and the Confederates had no choice but to retreat.

Our men were soon cooking their coffee and commenting on the occurrences of the day. Captain Gruff, who before the fight had not been much liked by the men, was now very popular.

"Did you ever see anything like our old captain, squinting along the ranks to see if there was a button out of line during the fight?"

"He's a brick!" said Orderly John, the color of whose hair would better justify the cognomen he applied to Captain Gruff.

"Yes, gilt-edged," said Osgood the cook, who was liberal with slang.

"I call him an hout and houter," said an English soldier.

The old soldier had proved his ability and bravery; and thenceforward his men were willing to follow him to the death, because they believed that he "knew his business," as they expressed it, and wasn't afraid.

The next morning the sun shone brightly on the ensanguined field. The enemy had abandoned the works on our front during the night, and had retreated.

The first battle of the Peninsular Campaign had been fought with a loss of 1,575 men of our division and of these 338 were killed. Detachments were sent out to bury the dead, and the abatis of fallen trees was, for sanitary reasons, set on fire and consumed.

The plain on our front, as we marched on to Williamsburg, was plentifully sprinkled with Union and Confederate graves.

As we passed through the town, we found the yellow flags of the Confederate hospitals still floating over "William and Mary's" College, while the marble slabs in a graveyard were yet red with blood where they had been used as amputating tables by the Confederates.

CHAPTER XII.

MARCHING ON.

AS we resumed our march the soldiers talked over the incidents of the battle just fought. It is doubtful, however, if the battle was so constant a topic of conversation in our ranks as it was around the home firesides. Neither did our men, even then, discuss it with the avidity they did other topics, such as how to cook the pigs (if they could be caught), which they with grave humor declared were hindering the march of the army.

Give a soldier plenty to eat and a good camping-place and rest and he will soon forget the hardship and perils of battle.

The value of rebel fractional currency, which we received in change for greenbacks from the people of that region, was also an interesting theme for discussion and conjecture. It was seriously believed by some (and questioned by others), that it could be used as money upon reaching Richmond.

The weather soon became very warm, and the roads were always either muddy or dusty. In all my campaigning in Virginia, between these two extremes there seemed no pleasant medium. The

wonderful ability of a Virginia road to yield the stickiest of mud that ever adhered to an army shoe one day, and blinding dust the next, was one of the constant miracles of the country.

With light hearts and high hopes of speedily overtaking and "gobbling" the rebel hosts, the army marched on, skirmishing with the pigs which ran at large, and converting the leaf tobacco found in barns and sheds to its own use.

Later on, we better understood the fleetness of foot, both of the enemy and of wandering Virginia pigs, and were less sanguine of success while in pursuit of either. Our marches up the Peninsula were short, but long enough when measured by the depth of the mud and length of the roads to cause the then comparatively raw soldiers of the army to cast away their clothing, until blankets, boots, overcoats, and soldiers' garments of every description actually littered the roads and fields.

We discussed the subjects usual to the same number of men at home; and while our views diverged as to what should be done with the Confederacy when we "bagged" it, yet there was little doubt among us that the Confederate army would soon be ours.

We arrived at "White House Landing," May 22, 1862. The evening of our arrival was dark and stormy, but when morning dawned the sky was lit up with the rosy hues of the coming sun, promising a beautiful day.

That morning, on arousing myself, I beheld the novel sight of a slumbering army compactly encamped. A green and level plain half a mile or more broad, whitened with tents and baggage wagons, and set in a fringe of surrounding green woods, lay between our encampment and the Pamunky River, where transports with supplies for the army had arrived. Soon the encampment began to show signs of awakening life. The smoke from numerous cooking fires curled up from among the tents, and drifted lightly away; the confused hum of voices began to be heard, the sharp tones of command, the roll call and its responses.

Ere long tents were struck; blue lines of infantry were aligned in martial order, and with burnished arms flashing in the sunlight, the long columns began their march once more. Then were heard the rattle of the wheels of army vehicles, the sharp crack of the mule driver's whip, and the defiant hee-haw of the mules, as if in reply.

The roads were now filled with marching columns, trains of artillery and pontoons and white-topped baggage wagons, with an occasional group of ambulances. There was no pride of display; the serviceable qualities of getting through the treacle-like mud, for the time seemed only uppermost. Yet it was the largest and best disciplined army which up to that time had trodden the soil of America; as great in all its trials and reverses, as when, at last, it overthrew its brave and martial antagonist.

In less than another week, the army was brought to a halt on the banks of the narrow, swamp-fringed Chickahominy. This river is a sluggish mill-stream which here describes a quarter circle, around and within eight to ten miles of Richmond. The corps of Porter and Franklin were held on the east of this river, while Keyes and Heintzelman were established upon its right banks. Our division went into camp on the Williamsburg road guarding the approaches to White Oak Swamp.

Shortly after going into camp at this place, I was ordered to report to the colonel of my regiment. As I entered his quarters, I found that Captain Gruff had preceded me. He took no notice of me — a common habit with him — and I saluted the colonel and stood at "attention" to receive his orders.

"I have received an order to detail a man to serve as a mounted orderly at Hooker's headquarters. Would you like the detail, Corporal Nickerson?" asked the colonel.

I glanced at Captain Gruff, but his face wore what one of our company boys called a "cast-iron expression," or rather lack of expression, and a stranger seeing him would not have imagined he had the slightest interest in the matter proposed.

This assumed want of interest on the part of my captain nettled me into replying, "Am I obliged to accept this detail?"

"There is no compulsion," replied the colonel with military conciseness.

"Then I will remain with my company, and do my duty as a soldier," I replied respectfully.

Captain Gruff's face began to lose its stolidity, and he stroked and twisted his goatee nervously, as if (as Jed was accustomed to say) he was milking for ideas.

"Don't pe a fool, Dick!" he exclaimed explosively. "My company is the vorst place in the army for you!"

"Why so?" I inquired.

"If I promotes you, the rest of mine regiment pe jealous and say, 'Oh vell, dot fellow he knew the captain pefore the war, and of course he recommends him for promotion! He's vone of the captain's pets.' You'd petter take this chance, Dick," said the old soldier, rising and persuasively laying his hand on my shoulder.

I still hesitated when Colonel Baker said, "The captain is right, promotion goes by favor as well as merit, and if you gain General Hooker's favor he may promote you in this or some other regiment."

"When Jed comes back to the regiment I want to be with Jed," I persisted.

"Don't bodder your head mit Jed's affairs; Jed is doing vell enough" — here the captain hesitated as if he had said too much.

As I had been secretly angry with Captain Gruff because of my suspicion that he was the cause of Jed's absence, I answered, looking him steadily and respectfully in the face, —

"I am afraid Jed is *not* well enough, but is in a dangerous service, and that you have been the cause of his being in that service."

The shot told! The captain's face, relaxing from its usual immovability, turned first red and then to a deadly pallor. He looked towards the colonel, who meanwhile had lit a cigar, and with his wounded arm on the camp table was complacently smoking. Finally the old soldier sat down; began hurriedly to fill his pipe, while his eyes assumed a look of abstraction.

"What are you going to say to that, captain?" said Colonel Baker quizzically.

Thus addressed, with his face relaxed from its grim rigidity, he replied, addressing me rather than his superior, —

"Dick! you know! No! no one knows but Got how I lofes Jed. I lofes him — better than mine life — but the place for a brave man to pe, is where he can pest serve his country."

The husky, broken tones of my captain, more than his words, showed his deep emotion.

"You had better accept, Corporal Nickerson. Positions such as I have offered you don't go a-begging. They are usually given to cavalrymen, not to infantry soldiers. I trust you will report to General Hooker for duty at once," said Colonel Baker.

I bowed my assent, and thanked him for his interest. Captain Gruff's face resumed its compos-

ure as he lit his pipe, and with one eye on that, glancing occasionally at me, said between whiffs in his gruffest tones, "Do your tuty, Dick, and if I hears from Jed, I lets you know."

One of my earliest passions was a love for horses, and I had never neglected an opportunity for riding or driving one. I was a good rider, and it was a vicious animal indeed that I could not manage.

Upon arriving at General Hooker's headquarters I was assigned to duty, and a cream-colored Mexican pony was given me for a saddle-horse. When I first mounted her there was an exchange of glances around headquarters which made me suspicious that she had some qualities that were not pleasant ones. I mounted, gave her the spur, and she went like the wind, and I thought her the easiest-going horse I had ever ridden. I had almost concluded that the little mustang was perfect, when, with wonderful quickness, she suddenly ploughed her fore-feet into the dust and threw up her heels so as almost to stand on her head. I clung tenaciously to her mane, and was luckily not dismounted. I then urged her on with spur and whip, fully determined to conquer her. For a half-hour she tried every expedient known to a vicious horse, including bucking, to dismount me, without success; and then, as if satisfied with her endeavors, placidly resigned herself to my direction, and thenceforward I had no trouble with her. A more intelligent, docile creature I never knew. She would come at

my whistle like a dog, and follow me at the snap of my thumb and finger. I afterwards learned it had been a standing joke at headquarters to loan her to officers and others visiting the camp, and that in most cases she had dismounted those who had tried to ride her.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE SADDLE.

WE arrived on the line of the Chickahominy about the 20th of May, and it was on the 25th that I began my duties as a mounted orderly. Thenceforward I was riding with communications and orders to various parts of the line, and was twice at McClellan's headquarters during the week succeeding. The Chickahominy (or that portion whose banks were occupied by the Union army) flows through a belt of swamp land, forming, in places, two or more streams, with border-lands so level and low that a rise of the stream by a few inches causes the overflow of a large area of its margin.

On these occasional visits to the west side of the river I had observed the engineers throwing out bridges, in order to afford easy communication between the divided wings of the army. At one place I observed a bridge built on canvas boats, while near the centre of the line a bridge of ordinary pontoons or scows spanned the narrow stream. This was called Duane's bridge, and was near McClellan's headquarters at Gaines' Mills. At still another place a bridge of logs, lashed to stumps

and suspended from the overhanging limbs of trees, was being constructed. This was afterwards known as Sumner's bridge.

On the night of the 30th of May there occurred a terrific tempest, during which the thunder resembled an artillery engagement. The fall of rain was so prodigious that it was like a supplementary deluge, and the soldiers facetiously declared that the commanding general was about to add swimming lessons and evolutions on stilts to their regular drill.

Early on the morning following, while it was still raining, I was sent with communications to the west side of the Chickahominy. Upon my arrival at the river I found the banks overflowed in every direction. Sumner's lower bridge, where I had intended to make a crossing, had been swept away by the freshet, and but fragments of it remained.

As it was impossible to cross here, I rode to the upper bridge, where, though its corduroy approaches were in part submerged, and only held in position by being tied to the stumps of trees, the portion overhanging the stream was still in place, though of doubtful stanchness. Here I finally crossed, and, riding to the right centre of the line, delivered my message.

At the Duane bridge, near the commanding general's headquarters, the narrow, sluggish stream of yesterday was wide and rapid, and the bridge of

boats swung midway in the rushing current. The river was still rising.

It was a little after ten o'clock that morning, while on my way back, that I heard the heavy boom of cannon in the direction of Fair Oaks.

A few words here are needed in explanation. The division of McClellan's army on a treacherous stream was in part a necessity of its position. Its line of manœuvre against Richmond was broken by the Chickahominy, which therefore had to be crossed. A heavy force was hence necessary to protect its communications with its base of operations on the Pamunky River.

The position of the army (with a line of communication almost in prolongation of its front of operations) made inaction perilous, as it was exposed to attack in detail; that is, one part was in danger of being overwhelmed before the other could come to its assistance.

The able Confederate general who commanded the opposing army was not a man to neglect such an opportunity.

At this time Casey's division was near Fair Oaks, with the position nearest the enemy strengthened by a redoubt and rifle pits. This was held by Nagle's brigade, supported by a brigade from General Couch's division.

Nagle's men, with their arms stacked, were working in the rain and mud, strengthening these defences. On this exposed force fell the first fury

of the attack, a little after ten o'clock that morning. The sharp, quick "*Crack! snap! crack!*" of rifles in their front first told that the picket line was attacked. The men engaged in the work of intrenching, thus warned, sprang to their arms, none too soon. The videttes were quickly driven back to the rifle pits and redoubts.

A heavy force of Confederates made an attack in front, while another gained their flank, and with a galling fire enfiladed their line. Its defenders fell back disorganized, and the redoubt was captured. Our men now slowly retreated (stubbornly contesting each step) on General Couch's position at Seven Pines.

It was the artillery firing of this fight which I had heard while riding forward on my return from the Chickahominy. After my return I was allowed but a short interval of rest, when I was ordered to carry a message to General Casey. As I rode towards Richmond I began to hear with greater distinctness the quick, sharp crackling, and the long, continuous roar of musketry.

As I rode forward on the muddy Williamsburg road the sound of battle came nearer and nearer, as if the contest was drifting southwards, towards Couch's position. I had now taken a road leading to the right from the Williamsburg road, and soon began to meet the chaff of the fight (its skulkers and cowards and disheartened ones), which is blown to the rear of a fight by the fierce whisper

of bullets. With the chaff also came some of that better element, its wounded. Many others had apparently escaped from their duties at the front under pretence of caring for injured comrades. These wounded ones, hurt often by the rough hurry of their conductors, were groaning or crying out piteously. The heads and limbs of some were bandaged with blood-stained handkerchiefs or fragments of garments.

"Don't go up there," called out a wounded man to me. "Our boys are cut all to pieces. The rebs are giving them Jessie."

"The whole army is skedaddling," said another.

I returned some careless answer to these people, and rode on, as there did not seem any immediate danger; and, besides, I had an official envelope in my belt for delivery.

I began now to meet more and more evidences of a conflict close at hand. Wounded men predominated in the current of humanity drifting past me. Here and there galloped a wounded, riderless horse, and in one instance a frantic wounded one was dragging fragments of an artillery carriage.

Before me a dense bank of smoke clung close to the ground, and from it there came the sounds of musketry, like bunches of Chinese crackers magnified hundreds of times; the hoarse spluttering and shrieking of shells, and jarring detonations of artillery.

"Where shall I find General Casey?" I inquired

of a wounded and hatless artilleryman, begrimed with powder.

"Don't know. If he's up to snuff, guess the old man is taking his nooning somewhere in the woods," was the saucy and jocose reply.

Some of the wounded were carried in blankets, which, with use of muskets, were converted into stretchers. Others, with characteristic ingenuity, had extemporized crutches. One of them limped towards me with a reversed musket for a crutch, into the muzzle of which he had fixed a round stick to bring it to the required length. He was a tall, rusty fellow in a cavalryman's suit, and so begrimed with powder, dirt, and blood that I did not recognize him until he spoke, in a howl of bass so deep as to startle me. It was my quondam acquaintance, "Sonny," of Williamsburg.

"You're in bad luck, Sonny. Are you hurt much?" I inquired.

"Goll darn it, yes! lost my horse again, and am bleeding like a pig. And see here," removing his hat, and showing a furrow ploughed by a bullet across his scalp.

I dismounted, bandaged his wounds, and advised him to get to the rear for surgical aid before they stiffened.

Prompted by information I had just received from "Sonny," I turned off on a road leading farther to the left to find General Casey and deliver my message. Here I was riding near the railroad, and

encountered fewer wounded men than before. Perceiving a party of men behind a fence along which grew a line of bushes and trees, I was just about to inquire for General Casey's headquarters, when there came the order, "Halt!" As I reined in my horse I saw my mistake. It was a group of Confederate infantry, and only one mounted man in the party. I had not much time for reflection, but at such a moment thought travels quickly.

"Who comes there?"

"An orderly with despatches," I replied.

"For whom?" came the inquiry.

"General Magruder," I replied, mentioning the name of the only Confederate general that occurred to me at that instant.

"Let me see your despatches!" said the officer.

With my left hand I held towards him the long official envelope. One of them climbed the fence, when with my right hand I drew my revolver, fired, wheeled, and lying close to the neck of my horse, whistled and gave her free rein, then swung myself over on the other side from my foes, clinging to her with feet and hands, when, as I had anticipated, *crack! crack!* came the sharp report of muskets and *zip! ping!* the bullets whispered around my ears. Near me was a field which was on the verge of a wood. My chance of escaping depended on my reaching this shelter. My horse seemed to understand this, for she kept on without my guidance. I gave one glance behind; a man

mounted on a powerful gray horse was following after me. I was nearing the fence over which I must go to reach the protecting shelter. I assumed an erect attitude, and put my horse directly at the fence, for my safety depended on her ability to clear it. If she failed, I must fight it out with the "Johnnie" who was following. She cleared the fence! I was near the woods, — and I looked back. The rebel's horse refused the fence and I was saved. He fired at me from too great a distance, and I could hear him swearing at his horse. I wheeled, and shouted, "Holloa, Johnnie!"

Reaching the protection of the woods I dismounted, examined my mare, and to my great satisfaction found her unharmed. I led her through the tangled undergrowth until we reached a path which led beyond danger. This done, I took new directions and was soon again near the uproar of the battle and in the vicinity of the Union lines. I met a mounted officer.

"Where is General Casey?" I inquired.

"Right over there," he replied.

In a stump lot where the smoke of battle hung near the ground, I found a group of officers, and among these one with the stars of a general on his shoulder-straps.

"I'm an orderly with a letter for General Casey," I said, as I approached the group.

"I am General Casey," said the gray-headed officer with the stars.

I handed him the sealed envelope. He read it and began to write an answer, when *zip*, *zm*, *bang!* the enemy began dropping shell over the group, and so near as to produce a stampede.

"They've got our range; drive a little to the left," said an officer.

While the group was re-assembling, the smoke, the shouts and cheers, and firing of musketry broke out with great fury on our front.

"They are driving us again!" remarked an officer.

"Is your horse fresh?" inquired the general of me. I explained that I had been on the road since six o'clock in the morning.

"We have already sent a message to General Heintzelman," said General Casey, dismissing me. "You can rest your horse before returning."

General Casey, on whom the attack had thus far fallen, finding himself hard pushed had sent to General Heintzelman, who commanded the left wing of the army, for aid.

The troops had now been rallied, and at the time I arrived, Couch's troops and the wreck of Casey's division were struggling against great odds to hold their own.

It was past four o'clock, and I was just mounted to return, when a loud cheer came from a column marching to the scene of conflict. It came from a brigade of Kearney's men, commanded by Berry. This brigade went into the woods on the left, where

their rifles commanded a part of the works abandoned by Casey.

"We can hold them now," said an officer confidently when Berry's men arrived.

It will be remembered that Sumner, on hearing the firing, had crossed the frail bridge which I have elsewhere mentioned, and had marched through rain and mud to the scene of the conflict. He arrived at an opportune moment. As Moreau chained victory to the standards of the French by flying to the assistance of Napoleon when hard pressed by the Austrians, so brave Sumner, by this act of duty, brought victory to the Union army struggling at Seven Pines against outnumbering foes.

On his arrival, five of his regiments charged on the enemy in the woods and drove them back in confusion. The lost ground was recovered, and the shattered divisions took up their old positions at Fair Oaks on the following day.

I was returning to the Williamsburg road when I came upon a group of wounded men cooking in a ravine. A camp-kettle of beans, held by a cross-piece resting on two sticks set in the ground, was jubilantly bubbling over a fire. Two tin drinking-cups, in which coffee was being made, were on the coals. One soldier was frying some bacon, while another was engaged in preparing a lean chicken which he had "procured," as he termed it, the day before the fight.

"What men are you?" I inquired.

"I belong to Company K, —th Mass.," said the one who seemed to be chief cook and chief growler.

"Quite a fight goin' on," drawled the soldier with the chicken. His trousers-leg was half gone, and the bloody bandages around his limbs showed the nature of his wounds.

"That ain't agoin' to spoil my appetite," said the chief growler, whose wound was in his head, and whose ears stood out combatively.

"If the rebs come on to us they'll catch it, if I have to throw this 'bean hod' at 'em."

"Have some coffee?" said another, a little fellow, wounded in the hand.

I was very hungry, and the idea of dining with the party did not strike me unfavorably. I dismounted, and was drinking some coffee, and munching hard-tack with a piece of fried bacon for a sandwich, when an uproar of musketry broke out in some scrub-oaks on the right of the ravine. The chief cook and growler crept on all-fours to the summit of the little knoll (behind which we were sheltered) to view the situation.

"What do yer see up there?" inquired my comrade of the chicken.

His answer was a howl from the chief cook, who came rolling over and over down the hill, with a bleeding ear. *Zip! zip! ping! ping!* came the bullets.

"Darn it! can't some of ye go up thar and pepper 'em out of it?" said the chief cook, with tears in his eyes.

No one accepted the offer. The soldier with the chicken took but little notice apparently of these circumstances, but, with the forepiece of his forage cap pointing skyward at right angles, was intently occupied with his chicken.

The cook had seized a musket to "pepper" the intruders, when a bullet from a concealed enemy tapped the camp-kettle just below the water line. The chief cook, forgetting his kindly intentions towards the enemy in the scrub-oaks, exclaiming, "Let us scoot!" seized his pet kettle of beans, and fled, followed with more or less celerity by the soldiers with the coffee, the soldier with the hen, the soldier with the frying-pan, and, not last, the soldier with the horse. In fact the whole line "advanced backwards," as the chief cook and growler afterwards said in describing the retreat.

Starting out once more from a base of safety, accompanied by my comrade with the hen, mounted on the horse, which I led, I once more reported at headquarters. I was surprised to find General Grover, with his brigade, holding the position; while General Hooker, with the 2d and 3d brigades, had marched to the battle-field, leaving with General Grover these characteristic instructions: "Hold your position at all hazards."

The cook's retreat. — Page 136.

After having procured surgical aid for my young friend with the hen, who proved to be Henry Grace, a soldier of my own division, I lay down, listening to the dull reverberation of the conflict, which gradually died away as darkness came on.

CHAPTER XIV.

RETREAT TO THE JAMES RIVER.

BEFORE leaving camp the next morning, I visited Henry Grace, whose coolness the day previous had greatly impressed me.

I found the surgeon with him, probing for a bullet. Grace was half reclining, watching the operation as if a mere spectator instead of a patient. The probing must have been painful, but his almost girlish face gave no indication of it. As I came to him, his face lit up with a half-humorous expression, as he said in his high-pitched nasal drawl, —

"The doctor has got more curiosity about this bullet's track than I have" — and just then his face grew a trifle paler, as if the doctor had touched a tender spot.

"There!" said the doctor, triumphantly holding up a flattened bullet as a result of his researches.

"Is that all?" inquired Grace.

"Well, just a bandage and cold water dressing will do for a time. Here, Quinn," addressing his attendant, "put a bandage on this leg," and then gathering up a formidable array of instruments, including saws, the surgeon withdrew.

"Ye's lucky, me bye!" said the Irish helper to

Grace, "sure some of thim gintlemen of the purfarsion would a sawed the leg off of ye instead of probing it!"

"You surely don't think they'd cut a leg off needlessly, Pat?" I inquired.

"Sure it's not for me to criticise," replied Quinn, "but it's the divil's own habit these gintlemen are getting of cutting off legs instead of curing thim. It was sax good legs I threw into a trench yesterday."

"Stop that blathering and don't wind the bandage so tight!" interrupted Grace, in a tone that was cutting in its iciness, and showed he could repel familiarity, notwithstanding his easy-going good-natured manner.

After a few moments' conversation with Grace, I took my leave.

On my arrival at Fair Oaks again I found our brigade occupying an advanced position. The rebel army had mostly withdrawn to the defence of Richmond, and General Johnston its commander, had been wounded during the battle.

As I rode up, heavy skirmishing was going on with their rearguard, which in withdrawing had accidentally become entangled with a portion of Sumner's line.

The next day our army re-occupied its old position, only our division had exchanged places with that previously occupied by Casey's men. In these intrenchments, and around the two-storied, square,

box-like "twin houses," where the battle had surged, there were vivid reminders of the fight.

The dead were not yet all buried. Battery horses encumbered the field, while the trees, fences, tents, camp-kettles, and cracker-boxes showed the marks of the bullets. Scattered over the ground were pieces of harness, broken muskets, and all the *débris* of a battle-wrecked camp. The enemy's dead in the surrounding swamps, where they could not be reached, were already defiling the air.

The process of clearing the battle-field began at once. Rails and brush were heaped over the dead horses and set on fire, the dead were buried, and once more the field resumed its ordinary appearance, and the army its regular routine of duties.

For several days succeeding, it rained as though a deluge was impending, and a period of suffocating heat ensued. The swamps and stagnant pools threw off exhalations of miasma, prolific of disease and death.

Constant skirmishes, meanwhile, occurred on our outposts. A general conflict at times seemed so imminent that on one day the call to fall in was sounded eight times at headquarters, and men were kept in line for hours, in readiness for battle.

On the 25th of June, while carrying orders, I visited my regiment, which had that day been advanced through swamps, thickets, and brier-entangled woods, and had captured two rebel sharpshooters, perched in the trees.

Captain Gruff was coming out of his tent to meet me, when a shot from the enemy passed through his tent and struck the ground a dozen paces in his rear.

"Glat to see you, Dick," said my captain; and then, with a look of disgust, and pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, said, referring to the shot just fired, "Dit you effer see such foolishness as dot?"

"Do you have much of this foolishness here?" I inquired.

"Shust all the time. They is cutting oup, marching, countermarching, and shooting like mat. Dem sharpshooters I shust sent to Sheneral Hooker says dot Magruder is in command, and they is oup to mischief somevare."

"Do you think they will attack us here?" I inquired.

"No: they plays mit us here, but strikes somevare else," was the shrewd reply of the old soldier.

And so it proved. Stonewall Jackson, marching up the Shenandoah Valley, and alarming the administration for the safety of Washington, had slipped between his pursuers, sent out to bag him, and was even then within striking distance of our right wing at Mechanicsville.

On the morning of the 27th, while riding to the different encampments, I heard the dull reverberations of distant cannonading.

It was the attack of sixty thousand men, under

General Lee at Gaines' Mill, on Fitz John Porter with thirty thousand.

Magruder, meanwhile, was holding the lines in our front before Richmond with twenty-five thousand.

McClellan had now planned to extricate his army from its false position by a retreat to a safer base on the James River.

It was a judicious and safe plan, though forced upon him, instead of being a matter of his choice.

On arriving at Captain Gruff's quarters I found him, as usual, in the sweltering heat, with his coat buttoned tight at the neck, puffing away at his pipe with a far away, thoughtful look in his eyes.

"What's the matter, captain?" I inquired. "Are the people on the other side acting foolishly again?"

"They shust acts like mat all der time," was his response, working his goatee excitedly over his nose like the rammer of a musket in the act of loading.

The enemy made feints upon our entire line. On the 28th our advanced positions, taken on the 25th, were abandoned.

Marching orders came with the morning. As I rode to the different encampments, men on every side were engaged in destroying clothing, provisions, and ammunition. Shot and shell were thrown into pools and brooks, tents and clothing were cut into shreds, canteens and camp-kettles were punched with bayonets, barrels of sugar, whiskey, and vine-

gar were overturned on the ground. No fires were allowed in this work of destruction, because they would excite suspicion. On my return to headquarters in the morning I found General Hooker superintending the destruction of his personal baggage.

Everything betokened that this army, which had been thundering at the gates of Richmond, was about to turn back in retreat. The rank and file could only imperfectly surmise the position of affairs, most of them professing to believe in a strategic move on Richmond.

The march soon began. Baggage wagons, herds of cattle, marching columns enveloped in dust, were seen on all the roads converging at Savage Station. Here a line of battle was formed in the edge of the woods, extending a mile to the right, with batteries planted in the clearing in front.

Toward the Chickahominy was now seen the smoke of burning bridges, stores, and munitions of war.

At the hospital camp of five thousand sick and wounded men there was much excitement on account of this unwonted activity.

Near this point I again encountered Sonny, the cavalryman, whose wounds were almost healed, but who was in his usual demoralized condition. He was covered with dust, and without blanket, jacket, or knapsack, but in perfect good humor, notwithstanding such trifles.

Learning that my acquaintance, Henry Grace, was at the hospital, I went, accompanied by Sonny, to look him up, and advise him to get away if possible.

The hospital camp was established on a hillside, on which grew a few stunted peach-trees, and consisted of tents and one house, with its surrounding negro quarters.

The inmates presented a pitiful sight. Many, victims of the swamp fever, were mere skeletons, and high-pitched, piteous tones of complaint, entreaty, or inquiry were heard on every side.

The air was quivering with heat, the earth baked and barren, and the air filled with the offensive effluvium peculiar to a crowded hospital. For a time I could find no trace of my friend, and I was about to abandon further search when the attitude of a soldier sitting under a tree some distance from me arrested my attention. The visor of his cap pointed upward at a defiant angle, while his collected, "go as you please" manner told me it was Grace. He was eating diminutive green peaches, and, as we approached, greeted me with "Hallo! orderly, what's up?"

"Well, we may take Richmond or take to the James River," said Sonny, without waiting for my reply.

"Whew! whose steeple are you?" said Grace sarcastically, looking upward at the towering form of Sonny.

"Me?" replied Sonny, nothing abashed, "I'm a dismounted cavalryman in search of a horse. Say, you; ain't you afraid you'll hurt your Latin internal parts with them air cholera bullets you are tucking away there?"

Grace paid no heed to this reply, but pursued the "tucking-away" process as he resumed the broken thread of our conversation.

"What's the army up to?" interrogated Grace. In answer I pointed to the clouds of black smoke which rose at different points along the railroad, marking the destruction of stores.

On the hill opposite to the camp was a heap of blue uniforms, boxes and barrels of clothing and provisions, piled up for destruction.

"I need a pair of trousers and a coat. Guess I'll go over and get some," said Sonny. In a few moments he came back very angry.

"What's the matter, Sonny?" I inquired.

"That lunk-headed officer wouldn't give me a thing. Said he'd been ordered to destroy the stuff, and couldn't account for the property if men were supplied from the stores."

"That's red tape with a vengeance," said Grace, sympathetically.

That afternoon Grace, mindful of my advice, hobbled into line and joined the exodus, rather than take his chances staying at the hospital camp. Sonny insisted that the movement was not a retreat, only a flank movement on Richmond.

As I have elsewhere intimated, there were many of his opinion at the time. The army pushed on, crowding the narrow defile that crosses White Oak Swamp. It had at least the compensating advantage that, while moving in that direction, it was preserved from a flank attack.

About five o'clock we heard the roar of battle in our rear, where brave Sumner was engaging the enemy at Savage's Station, and where he beat them in the encounter. That night he obeyed orders and retreated, in order that he might not be cut off from the main army, leaving the hospital camp of five thousand miserables in the hands of the enemy.

The next day, the 30th of June, our division had halted near the church at Glendale; and active cannonading at White Oak bridge, which had been destroyed, showed that Jackson was following closely on the heels of the retreating army. The army of Lee had, meanwhile, learned of our movements, and had sent a large force around through Richmond to intercept our retreat.

Our position at Glendale was the key point where they hoped to break through our lines, divide the army, capture its trains, and overwhelm it in disastrous defeat. Here we waited all the forenoon, while our train wagons, herds of cattle, and troops passed over the hot and dusty road.

Longstreet and Hill attacked by the Newmarket road in the afternoon. McCall's division of Penn-

sylvanians, stretched at right angles across the Newmarket road, and parallel and in front of the Quaker road, was first assailed about three o'clock. The batteries in front of this line were also fiercely charged, and the cannoneers driven from their guns.

Our left, held by Seymour's brigade, was meanwhile doubled up by a fierce attack and driven in between Sumner on the left and the position we were holding.

Our line was soon ordered to advance, and went in on the double-quick to regain the lost ground. I saw my regiment with the rest; Captain Gruff with drawn sword, and with the grim composure on his red face, common to him in times of danger.

Some of McCall's men came rushing from the front calling out, —

"We're whipped! we're whipped!"

"My men are all cut to pieces," exclaimed an excited officer.

"Dry up, you old fool," said some one from our ranks.

"Sure we don't need any cavalry to keep us from running away," shouted a voice that I recognized as that of my old friend O'Keif, who was now a lieutenant.

Then the din of musketry, the cannonade, the long yell of the Confederates, and the hurrah of the Union soldiers, showed that our lines were fiercely engaged with the enemy. Another voice of battle was also soon heard; the boom of the

heavy guns on our gunboats on the James River. Their shells struck the ranks of our enemy on the left, and, we afterwards learned, produced great consternation.

When nearly dark I found my old regiment holding the road the enemy had entered that afternoon. Captain Gruff was engaged in stationing pickets on all the paths leading from the adjacent swamps and woods.

"Dis swamp is full of 'rebs,' and ef we keeps still we gobbles dem," said the captain, with a wise nod, when I asked him what was going on.

As it grew darker we could hear those who were separated from their commands, and who were wandering around in the swamps, calling out the name of their regiments and companies.

Our men, instructed by Captain Gruff, answered them as if from their friends, directing them into the Union lines, where they were captured.

A large number of prisoners, in this way, were brought into our lines. Most of them were poorly clad in butternut and gray homespun, with strips of carpet for blankets. Few had knapsacks, but wore their blankets over their shoulders with the ends tied together under the left arm.

One of these prisoners was a captain, and accosted Captain Gruff with extended hand, —

"Hullo, sergeant! Don't you remember me?"

The captain did not remember him, but I at once

recognized him as Walker, the man who had escaped from the guard while under court-martial at Fort Monroe. He afterwards informed us that his father was a prominent Virginian, and that his escape had been connived at by the officers at the time it occurred.

The next morning our troops took possession of Malvern Hill, where the Confederates made a succession of daring attacks and met with bloody repulses. This was the last of the seven days' battle and retreat, during which the Union army inflicted a loss of twenty thousand men on the Confederacy, while sustaining a loss of only fifteen thousand.

The physical results were in our favor, but the moral results were with the Confederates, who had raised the siege of Richmond, and had caused the Union army to retreat from its position. I did not witness the arrival of the army on the James River, as will be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

A PRISONER.

IT was twilight when I began my return from Captain Gruff's. As I rode along the darkling woods, I thought over the events of the campaign; wondering where Jed was; and was soon in that half-dreamy condition of mind in which one acts mechanically, while his thoughts are far away from his surroundings.

In the midst of these reveries I was brought to myself by the restive conduct of my horse, which was nervously jerking at the bit, as if to attract my attention. I spoke to her sharply, when, —

"Halt! Who goes there?" came a sharp peremptory challenge.

In the gathering darkness I could not distinguish my challenger, but I replied, —

"An orderly with orders. What troops are those?"

"The 60th North Carolinas," came the reply.

"I see that I am on the wrong road," I said, now recovering my presence of mind, for I at once perceived that I must get away quickly if I did not wish to go to Richmond sooner than the army did.

At the same instant I wheeled, and clinging to

my horse with my face to her neck urged her forward.

The report of muskets and the ping of bullets around my ears showed that I had acted none too soon.

I had not gone more than five hundred yards, when I heard the measured tread of a marching column approaching me from the opposite direction. As I listened I could distinguish the sharp though suppressed tones of command, and was satisfied that a regiment was marching down the road. Were they friends, or foes?

I drew my horse into the edge of the wood which skirted the road, and, as if understanding my purpose, she stood as still as if made of bronze or stone. The least motion must have betrayed us, the road was so narrow.

I was still uncertain whether the column was Federal or Confederate when the word "Yanks" from some one in the passing column satisfied me that they were enemies.

It seemed an hour when the last file of men passed, and I drew a long breath of relief. I did not realize until then what a tension had been put upon my nerves.

I was now quite confident that there were no enemies on my route. My horse, however, soon began to act as if she suspected danger.

Thus warned, I walked her slowly down the road, until some one cried out "Halt! Halt!" ac-

companied by the ominous click of cocking muskets, and at the same time my bridle was seized.

"What troops are these?" I inquired.

"Third Alabama," was the response.

"I have just come from the 60th Carolina, and am in a hurry; let go my bridle!" I exclaimed, trying to turn my horse.

"That card don't take the trick, Yank," said a voice.

Trusting to the darkness I fired my revolver at the man holding my horse, and at the same time urged the horse forward. It was a failure. My revolver missed its aim.

I was now roughly pulled from my horse and was a prisoner.

"If you have any papers, hand them over here," was sharply commanded.

A lantern was procured, and I was searched, and then marched up the road under guard. We soon came to a fire, around which were grouped several officers. Here an officer with three stars on his collar sharply questioned me. I was not very careful to answer his questions correctly, for I knew enough of military usage to know that by correct answers I might give very important information to the enemy.

"This man," said the officer, "either knows too much or too little for our purpose."

As I was led from this unsought conference, I asked my guard, "What officer is that?"

"That is General Longstreet: he's our general, and I reckon he's 'bout the best general we uns have got, except Uncle Robert."

"Who's Uncle Robert?" I queried.

"Why, General Lee. We uns will be in Washington next week, and I reckon the whole durned Yankee nation will know Uncle Robert by that time."

I lay by a fire under guard all night, not sleeping much, but going over and over with the scenes of the evening which I have here briefly recounted. When morning came, I, with about twenty other prisoners, was hurried on to Richmond.

As we arrived at the spot where I had been questioned the previous evening, I saw a keen-eyed mounted officer, very straight and dignified, talking with General Longstreet.

"What officer is that?" I inquired of the guard.

"That's General Lee," was the reply.

As we were halted near this spot, I saw my horse led out and mounted by a young officer.

"If you will watch that horse and officer," said I to the talkative sergeant of the guard, "you'll see some fun."

The officer mounted, took the bridle carelessly, and rode off at a canter; when, quick as a flash, the little horse ploughed her front feet into the dust, and threw up her heels with a flourish of those members, as if she intended to kick out the sky.

The officer, taken unawares, was pitched over her head.

The whole squad laughed, but the dismounted officer did not. He attempted to catch her, but she evaded him as nimbly as a dog. After several trials had been made, I said to an officer near, —

"I will catch her, if you wish me to?"

The officer assented. I gave a peculiar whistle, and she came to me as if overjoyed at once more seeing me.

"This is my blanket strapped to her," I said to the officer whom I had previously addressed.

"No, sir, it's mine," said the officer snappishly.

Before they could take her bridle from my hands, I gave her a signal and off she pranced again, kicking at everything she passed, and all attempts to catch her proved unavailing.

The officer who had first mounted her came up, and after speaking a few words to the officer with whom I had been speaking, said to me, —

"Catch that horse, and you shall have your blanket."

I again called her, and, neighing and capering, she came in response to my call, and rubbed her nose against my arm.

My heart sank, and I almost cried at the thought of parting with her. The young officer loosened my blanket and handed it to me, saying, —

"She's a beautiful creature, and I am sorry that you must lose her, but it is the fortune of war."

I replied, "If you treat her firmly but kindly, she will behave well. Don't strike her."

The officer replied politely, "I thank you, sir! I love a horse and will treat her well."

As we marched away, I again saw my little horse prancing over fences and ditches in the direction of Richmond, apparently defying every effort to catch her.

A two hours' march now brought us to the rebel capital. There were no vehicles in its streets. Here and there groups of women on the sidewalks anxiously interrogated our guards. I was told that almost every house was being prepared for a hospital. The prisoners were allowed to go into the shops to buy bread. In one of the shops an Irishwoman treated me to raspberry wine, and gave me a loaf of bread.

"Do you think McClellan will get into Richmond with his army?" inquired the woman.

"Yes," I replied, "the Yankee army will be here in a week."

"And sure I hope they will," said she, with a sigh: "we don't dare say our soul's our own, and I'm agin this government, anyway."

We were marched along by the side of the canal on Carey Street, where several naked boys, bathing, shook their tiny clinched fists at us, shouting in tones of threat and derision.

We were soon halted before an isolated three-story block, near and in line of the canal, on one

corner of which was displayed the sign, "Libby and Son, Ship Chandlers and Grocers." Here we were conducted up a steep and filthy staircase to a large room, in which there was an ordinary heating stove, and in one corner of the room was a large round tank supplied with James River water.

The building had just been cleared of prisoners, and the air was reeking with the effluvium of wounds and sickness. The stench was so terrible that one instinctively held his breath.

From this room we were taken to the third story, next the roof, where the air was still worse, and where we found about a hundred other prisoners. No food was given us that day.

In a few days more, the wounded prisoners from Savage's Station were added to our numbers, some with amputated limbs, others with unhealed, festering wounds, and all suffering from heat and fatigue. Here they were marshalled, regardless of their sufferings, jostling against each other's hurts as they staggered in. The room was soon filled to suffocation with inmates; there was scarcely room to lie down.

The cracks and crevices swarmed with vermin. The hot sun beat on the low roof above us until the heat became so unendurable that men were constantly crowding to the windows and exclaiming, "I shall die unless I get fresh air."

When rations were issued, men struggled with each other for the contents of the buckets of soup

and the meagre pieces of bread. The prisoners fought with each other for a fair division, while those who distributed the food were more intent on finishing their duties quickly, than in doing them properly.

For several weeks previous to my capture I had had symptoms of swamp fever. I became weak and nervous, and in attempting to rise one day, fell unconscious.

"Got a fever, old chap, I guess," said a fellow-prisoner in kindly tones.

"How does a fever begin?" I inquired.

"You are cold and shivering one moment, and the next you are burning up," was the laconic answer.

"I guess that's what's the matter, for that's a descriptive list of my feelings," I replied.

That night I could not sleep, and the next morning was weak and trembling, and hardly able to stand.

"Any one got any quinine?" asked a gruff and familiar voice.

I turned to the questioner, but could not recognize the face, which was turned from the light.

"Isn't it Sonny?" I inquired.

"By gosh, that's what they give me in place of a name, sometimes, but who on earth air you? Jerusalem! if it isn't the little orderly;" for though I was by no means little, thus Sonny always designated me.

"You look all beat out, and 'powerful' far gone, as the rebs say."

"How did they get you?" I inquired.

"Well," he replied, "I was with a lot of other fellows coming across White Oak swamp; they were a sick and wounded crowd, and I was the only one of 'em with a musket. The rebs began to tag close to our heels, so I said, sez I, 'You fellers make tracks as fast as you can, and I'll cover your retreat.' They got away, and the rebs got me."

About nine o'clock that morning a Confederate officer came into our room, saying, —

"All you Yanks, who want to get out of this hole and go to Belle Isle, where there is good air and running water and trees, get your traps together lively and tumble out here."

To me at the time, fresh air and plenty of water seemed the most desirable things on earth. I succeeded in getting into line with a crowd of struggling sick and hungry miserables to go to Belle Isle.

The name of this place itself seemed to speak of shade and comfort, and had not then become a synonym of suffering and imprisonment. As I fell into line, I saw a man near me who looked so much like Jed that I called out, "Jed! Jed! don't you know me, Jed?"

The man stood still, without one look or motion of recognition, and soon moved away. I was mistaken, and yet it seemed impossible.

Was the guard right when, looking at me compassionately, he said, —

"I reckon ye'd better not go down to Belle Isle; it's a right hard place, old hoss, and ye ain't quite right here," tapping his forehead significantly.

However, I persisted. There did not seem to be any place worse than the one I was leaving, and I might get into one that was better. This kindly Virginian carried my blanket and haversack, and helped me along as best he could.

The sun was very hot during the first part of our march, but soon the sky became overcast with signs of an approaching storm. Many of those marching to Belle Isle were, like myself, sick, and hence the march was slow.

After crossing the long railroad bridge which spans the river from the Manchester side to Belle Isle, it began to rain; and we were halted in an old rolling-mill, where I lay down, thoroughly worn out with fever and exhaustion, and my head racked with pain.

At last we reached the Belle Isle prison camp, where all my hopes of comfortable quarters were dispelled. The ground of the camp was almost on a level with the James River, and was wet, and in places overflowed.

The guard who had carried my blanket here left me, and I was without friends, or even shelter from the pitiless storm. The few ragged tents were crowded with men, and there was no room for me.

The inky blackness of night came on, relieved only by vivid lightning flashes. I became delirious and unconscious by turns; I could hear a voice which I sometimes recognized as my own, shrieking with unnatural laughter, singing in discordant strains, or muttering unmeaning phrases.

I remembered nothing more of what occurred for days. One morning (which seemed but the next morning after) I awoke, and, framed in the entrance of the small tent in which I lay, saw Jed's face looking in upon me with kindly interest.

A great rush of gladness came to my heart as I feebly reached out my hand to him, and faintly, but with the eagerness with which the thirsty ask for drink, cried, "Jed! Jed!"

I feared at first that this was but a creature of my fancy, like the many other imaginings of my fevered brain, of which I retained a dim remembrance. When Jed came and sat beside me, holding my thin hands, I no longer felt pain or care. Without uttering a word, I fell into a deep refreshing sleep, from which I awoke to find Jed still compassionately bending over me. I began to grow strong from that hour. Should I ever be sick again if Jed was with me? I had not before realized how my heart had hungered for him in all these months of absence. I could not regard even captivity as a misfortune when it brought Jed to my side once more; and even now, after a lapse of years, I cannot recall the effect which his presence and sym-

pathy had upon me (so like a ministering angel), without thanking God for bringing to me the benediction of his presence. In a few days, when I had grown stronger, Jed told me the story of his adventures since our last meeting, which I must reserve for another chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

JED'S STORY.

"TWENTY-FOUR hours," said Jed, "before coming into these lines as a spy, I had no more thought of it than you had. The proposition was made to me in the morning, and that evening I accepted, and reached the rebel lines at Yorktown the same night, as a deserter. Pretty quick work that, even in the army, where a man decides and acts promptly.

"About that time the information received through the regular secret-service channels was not satisfactory: it was contradictory, and these contradictions, it was believed, could be explained only by some one acting independently of, and without the knowledge of, the Secret-Service Bureau. The number of troops confronting us, whether it consisted of a small force or of the entire rebel army, as well as questions of minor information, were, if possible, to be determined.

"To act independently of the regularly organized Secret-Service Bureau was more agreeable to me, from the fact that it appealed to my pride, and at the same time seemed safer than to be one of many in a similar service.

"It was about midnight when I was conducted to our pickets, and turned loose between the opposing lines. You remember the night was dark, and by an understanding with the officer of the picket, when I escaped I was to be fired upon.

"The plan was carried out as arranged. I broke from the officer with whom I had been conversing, and, running a few yards, threw myself face downward on the ground. It was well for me that I did, for the rifles of the picket-line were so well directed, notwithstanding the darkness, that a bullet struck the back of my head, and took a strip of hair from it, right here," said Jed, directing my attention to a place on his head where the bullet had grazed his scalp.

"The picket-lines of our enemy at this point were not more than two hundred yards from our own, and I crawled in the mud on my hands and knees nearly the whole of the remaining distance to the rebel pickets.

"I was really angry that I had been hit by our own men, and this fact, with the fire directed at me while escaping, made it easy for me to assume the *rôle* of a deserter. You will remember that when I left I carried all my equipments, as well as my knapsack. In the morning I was conducted to General Magruder. The general was writing when I entered his presence and stood at 'attention.' He turned and looked at me in perfect silence for a moment, with a steadiness that was trying to my

nerves; and then, with an indescribable lisp, which did not, however, detract from his sternness, said, —

"'Why did you come to our lines?'

"'I'm sick of the service,' I replied.

"'Want to join us?' he inquired.

"'Yes, but don't care to be caught by the Yanks.'

"'What service were you in?'

"I told him, and casually mentioned Captain Gruff.

"'Ah!' exclaimed he, 'is he there with the volunteers?'

"'Yes,' I replied, 'and men who know nothing about military affairs are promoted over men like Captain Gruff and myself.'

"'Ah!' said he, with his curious lisp, and in a sarcastic tone, 'your smartness was not appreciated, then?'

"'Put the word experience in place of smartness, general, and you are correct,' I replied.

"'What experience have you had more than other volunteers?' he asked.

"'I was in the regular service before the war,' I replied.

"The general now exhibited increased interest, and when I told him the branch of service I had been in, and the officers under whom I had served, he turned to his desk, scribbled a note, sent it off by an orderly, while I still stood at 'attention.'

"To clinch what I had already said, I remarked, 'I have always been accustomed to serve under

good officers and gentlemen, and not men who have no title to either except their uniforms. I don't like to submit to inferiors.'

"The general then began questioning me as to the strength and composition of our forces. According to instructions received before leaving our lines, I told him. Notwithstanding the apparent straightforwardness of my replies, I thought I detected a look of distrust in his face. I was getting uneasy, and had begun to lose something of my composure, when the general said, 'You may go now.' As I turned, I confronted my old Captain Doughty, under whom I served a short time on first entering the service, as the reader will remember.

"The captain recognized me at once, and, extending his hand, said kindly, —

"'Are you in our service?'

"'No, but I expect to be,' I replied.

"He glanced curiously at my uniform, and said, in pleasant tones, 'You may go now, and return in a few minutes.'

"Thus commanded, I sauntered around Yorktown for a while, and it was a novel experience to be viewing our own lines from the rebel position. In a few moments I was recalled by an orderly. As I reached the door, I heard Doughty saying, 'He's all right. I'll vouch for the boy;' and my position was assured from that moment.

"I was placed on duty for a time with Doughty, who was now a brigadier-general, and was kept

busy drilling new men in artillery tactics. For a time my escape to their lines was a constant theme for comment among the rebels, whom I often heard remarking, as I passed to my duties, 'There goes that Yank!'

"Meanwhile I had eyes and ears open, and was constantly gathering important information, though I was careful not to excite suspicion by asking leading questions, or by too much curiosity. I had at the time of my escape a bad cold, making me somewhat deaf for the time, which, together with the absent-mindedness of one who is busy with his own thoughts, and who speaks but seldom, gave me a reputation for deafness which soon became useful to me. For, although I heard as well as any one as soon as I got rid of my cold, the reputation for deafness stood by me, and the general would often say to those who spoke to me, 'Speak a little louder; he's quite deaf.' Thus, favored by accident, I was soon in possession of important information, and formed a good idea of the composition and strength of the rebel forces at Yorktown.

"The desire to communicate this information, and get back to our lines, now weighed heavily on my mind. I was stationed on the water battery near the York River, opposite Gloucester Point. One morning after roll call I was sauntering around near the water battery, when I saw a small boat of the dory pattern lying at the wharf. There was a pair of oars in her, and she was kept there, as I

afterwards learned, to communicate with the force opposite at Gloucester Point. This boat I determined to use, at the first opportunity, for the purpose of reaching our lines.

"With this design, one dark, rainy night I began to put my plan in execution. Unfortunately, the guards stationed along the water front had been strengthened, and unusual vigilance was at that time enjoined, as if in anticipation of a night attack. I made my way to the wharf where the boat lay, but found a sentinel walking his post across the line of my approach to the wharf. As it was dark and raining, I found but little difficulty in reaching the boat while the sentry was walking his post with his back to me, but in attempting to unfasten her I found she was held by a chain locked to the wharf.

"I was not prepared for this, and was about to abandon my purpose; but, feeling around in the darkness, I ascertained that the chain was held to the boat by means of a staple driven into the deck of her prow. I wound the chain around one end of an oar I found in her, and with one wrench freed her from the wharf.

"The noise of the rattling chain must have been heard by the sentry, for he called out as I pushed off into the current, and drifted away on the outgoing tide.

"In less than an hour I had landed near the Union Battery No. 1, on Wormley Creek, and reached, as I thought, Captain Gruff's tent, which

was not far from the shore. I entered, and, without awakening its inmate, struck a match, but instead of Captain Gruff saw a strange officer asleep in his blankets. I noiselessly got out of the tent, and in returning encountered a camp sentinel, who challenged me. Instead of answering his demand for the countersign, I inquired for Captain Gruff's quarters. He pointed out a tent not far distant, where a light was burning. In another moment I gave the colonel and Captain Gruff a surprise.

"I was shivering with wet and cold; but, having no time to lose, I communicated my information to the captain, in order that he might get it to our commanding general without exciting the suspicion of his regular corps of secret-service men, some of whom might be around his quarters. My information of the arrival of re-enforcements from Richmond, and also other facts, was deemed important. After I had communicated all this to Captain Gruff he looked at his watch, then at an almanac, and said, 'By the time you reach your boat, the tide will have turned, and the current will carry you back.' I had not expected to return, and objected. The captain briefly outlined the information which it was still desirable should be obtained, and said, 'You can probably reach their lines before daylight without exciting suspicion, and such a chance will not occur again in a lifetime.' I was easily persuaded, for I was not faint-hearted, and, with clothing still wet, in another hour was on my way back.

"Reaching my little craft, I silently rowed up the York River, until I perceived that I was not far from Yorktown. The tide was low, and, as I thought myself likely to be detected in running my boat up to the wharf, I landed on a sand-flat, made bare by the receding tide, and walked in the direction of the water battery, which seemed to be but a few hundred yards from my landing-place.

"I soon discovered that I had made a mistake. There was a deep channel between me and the water battery, and it was so dark that if I turned back there was but little chance of my finding the boat again.

"I now went, as I thought, towards the shore, so as to keep clear of the channel. As I walked the water grew deeper and deeper every moment. Each way I turned seemed worse than the other. I started in the direction where I thought the shore ought to lie, but found myself in still deeper water. I now halted and considered. As the result of my deliberation, I advanced twenty paces in either direction, in order to determine where the shore was. A fog had now so increased the darkness that it seemed almost palpable to the touch.

"My experiment for reaching the shore was a failure. The water was continually growing deeper and deeper, whichever way I moved. I was lost!

"There was apparently left to me but one alternative, that of swimming in the direction in which the current set. I had just determined on this when

I felt something bump against me. I put out my hand; it was a boat. I clambered on board and found it was my own skiff, which, liberated from the sand-flat by the incoming tide, had drifted down to me.

"To such an extent do conditions of mind depend upon incidental contrasts, that in a moment it was as if I had passed from gloom to light. With senses all alert I now steered my boat with the tide. It was not long before I felt the boat strike against something which impeded her course. It was a wharf. But where? I listened, but could hear no sound. I landed upon the wharf, but nearly fell back into the water, so bewildered was I by the events of the night. I now turned towards what I knew to be the shore end; listening at every step, I passed along the hard sandy shore for a short distance, when I was halted by a sentinel.

"I was re-assured and confident when he said, 'Been longer than usual, haven't you?' Though I did not have the most distant idea to what he referred, I assented by saying, 'Yes,' and passed on without further notice. I now recognized my surroundings; reached my quarters, changed my wet clothes for dry ones, and notwithstanding the perilous adventures through which I had passed, soon fell asleep. It was broad daylight when I awoke and learned that my absence from camp had not been noticed or suspected. The boat had been found, but beyond some conjectures as to how the

chain became detached from her, I heard no comments.

"During the weeks which followed, I was an interested spectator of the occasional artillery firing along the fortified lines.

"Fortune again favored me. As I could write, and was considered too deaf for ordinary soldier's duty, I was recommended, and became an orderly for General Johnson.

"By this time the *rôle* of a deaf person came very natural to me, and I practised showing anger when it was alluded to, as deaf men usually do. The habit of keeping my mouth shut grew upon me just in proportion as I exercised it. I remembered an old maxim, 'Least said, soonest mended,' which to one in my circumstances seemed to contain the essence of common sense.

"I was on duty at General Johnson's quarters when he issued the order for the retreat from Yorktown. But for being so closely tied to headquarters, the bustle of preparation which now began on every side would have given me a good opportunity for escape, with information to our army of the intended retreat.

"While the preparations were going on I went into the general's tent, and saw spread on the table a map showing the earthworks and roads at Williamsburg and other places between Yorktown and the Pamunky River. Fortunately, I had some tracing-paper with me. This I placed over the

drawings, and, with my face towards the door, began rapidly to trace them.

"I had finished two of the most important ones, when I heard approaching footsteps, and concealing my work I threw myself into a seat and was apparently sleepy, listless, and indifferent, when the person whose steps I had heard came in.

"I had to be spoken to twice before I understood that he wished to see General Johnson. 'Can't you go for him?' said the visitor. 'No sir!' I replied, 'I am attending to these quarters during the general's absence;' whereupon he sat down to wait.

"A clerk who had been absent on duty or at dinner, came in and seated himself at the table and entered into earnest conversation with the visitor. I took a seat outside, near the door, and in a few minutes the clerk and visitor came out conversing.

"As soon as they were out of sight I returned to the general's quarters, made copies of several important papers, concealing them in an inner pocket.

"General Johnson soon came in, and with an absent manner, as if much pre-occupied with his thoughts, began writing. I could see by the motion of his pen that the communication was to General Magruder, and that it was not important.

"My rule was never to pry around for information, or to tamper with letters, but to get possession

of such as seemed to come most readily to hand. The intelligence thus gained was not strained to fit theories, and hence was genuine.

"I now wished to reach our lines with the information secured. It was only two days after this that our retreat began. My riding up to the lines of my regiment at Yorktown was simply accident and not design.

"I had gone to the front during the battle, hoping I might get a chance to reach our lines in safety. During the advance a rebel officer had been shot from his horse. I caught the horse, and, quickly assuming the officer's uniform and equipments, mounted, and had regained the advancing line, when a volley from your brigade threw our columns into confusion and gave me my opportunity.

"Of course I ran great risks, but I took the risk, for I felt I was in God's hands and was rendering good service to my country."

In reply to the question of how he came on Belle Isle he said, —

"I was wounded at Fair Oaks, while on duty with General Johnston and was sent to the hospital at Richmond. Although I was not fit for duty, I often went into the street, doing errands for our hospital near Libby. It was on one of these errands that I saw you. It almost broke my heart to walk away without noticing your appeal, but it was the only course I could pursue.

"I went back to the hospital at once, and asked

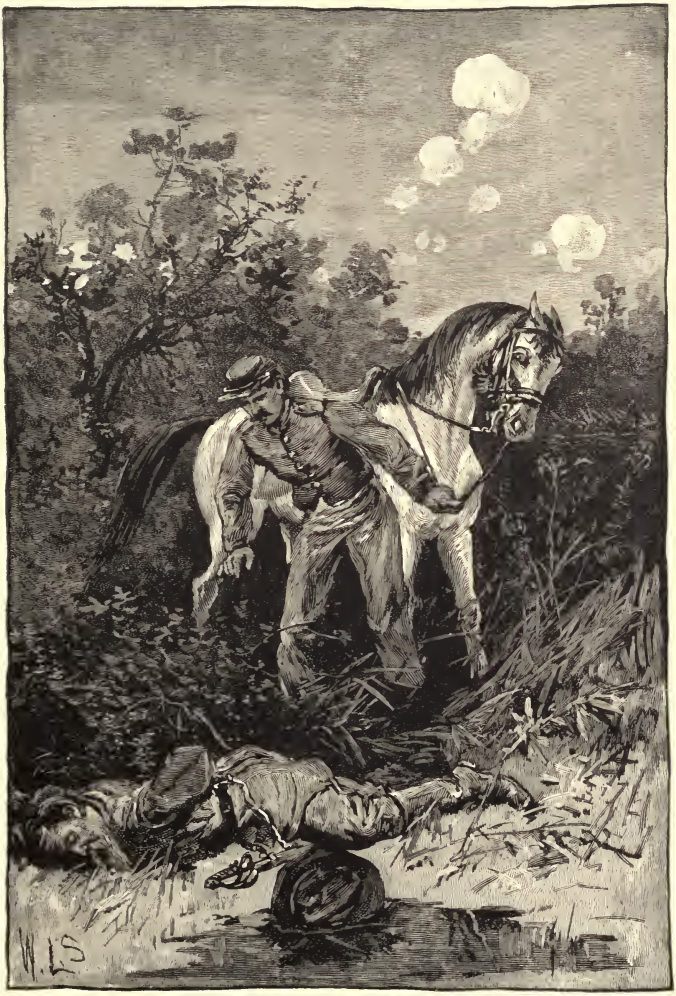
the privilege of going to the front. It was granted, and I was considered a patriot.

"That night I changed my clothes for a suit of Union blue I had bought at Libby, and without being noticed joined a group of prisoners that were on their way to Belle Isle, where I knew you had been sent."

"Ain't you afraid of being detected?" I inquired.

"There is always a possibility, but it is hardly probable in this case," was Jed's reply. "I think there will be a parole soon, and then I shall get into the Union lines, with the rest of you, as a prisoner of war!"

The plan was a good one, and Jed reasoned that his safety consisted in the fact that his former rebel associates believed him to be in the hospital, while those in the hospital believed he had gone to resume his old army duties. Such in substance was Jed's story, though there were many other interesting details which I might give did space permit.



"During the advance a rebel officer had been shot from his horse." — Page 172.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CONVALESCENT'S GLIMPSE OF BELLE ISLE IN 1862.

CONVALESCENT at last, I began, with feeble steps and slowly recovering strength, to familiarize myself with the prison.

To rise enfeebled from a fever and its delirium in this wretched place at first gave to all my surroundings a tone of unreality. Nothing seemed real but Jed.

The squalid wretchedness, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been met with cheerfulness or hopeful endurance, now seemed to me like a part of my fevered dreams, — an oppressive nightmare, from whose thraldom I was impatient to break. I chafed with nervous expectancy, as if its spell could be suddenly dissolved. The present seemed interwoven with some intangible remembrances, which my mind was constantly attempting to connect with its present surroundings, or with the reality of a well-defined past.

From this semi-dream condition I was at times fully awakened by the voracious demands of an unsatisfied appetite, common to those recovering

from a fever. This hunger was accompanied by a craving for luxuries, which could not be satisfied. The rations at this time on Belle Isle were very meagre. A small half-loaf of baker's bread, supplemented once or twice a week by thin and dirty bean soup, from the top of which maggots could be skimmed, constituted a day's rations for a prisoner. There were days, however, when no food was issued. Whether occasioned by neglect, accident, or design, it was nevertheless true that no back rations, to make up this deficiency, were ever issued.

No excuses, however ingenious, could satisfy this lack of food, as my appetite was clamorous for that, and not for apologies. When rations were issued regularly, my appetite seemed to grow larger as the size of my rations increased.

Jed had some money, perhaps a hundred dollars in all, of Confederate money and local "shinplasters." As he thought it imprudent to come in familiar contact with the guard, for fear of recognition, I did such trading or buying as was necessary.

Women sometimes came to camp with bitter dried-peach pies, guiltless of sugar, and other doubtful goodies. The most palatable food was obtained from the guards, who were sometimes willing to sell Indian corn cakes, wheat biscuit, or bacon. Once I bought a dozen eggs and a quart of milk, and Jed and I had a feast which made our boyish stomachs glad for a whole day. But, as if the Confederacy

was depleted by this output, the chance to purchase these articles of food did not again occur in our experience at Belle Isle.

The guards were forbidden to hold conversation or to trade with their prisoners, but their great desire to obtain "Yankee fixin's" opened a way to a commerce which was improved to its fullest extent by both parties. I do not remember a single guard on Belle Isle who did not inquire if I had a jack-knife which I would sell or exchange. Thus it might be said that the jack-knife opened trade, otherwise forbidden to Yankee enterprise, all along the rebel guard line. At first I used the money I had to buy food, but the prices were so high that money melted away like ice in the tropics, and the traffic seemed likely to culminate in our financial ruin. So, actuated by thrifty sentiments, I bought jack-knives, watches, and boots with our Confederate scrip, and with these, instead of money, advanced confidently to trade with the guard, who were supposed to be controlled by inflexible rules, many of which, however, I was able to violate with impunity. The prisoners occupied their leisure time (and their time was mostly of this description) in manufacturing pipes of brier-root, napkin and finger rings of bone, the engraved letters or designs being filled with melted sealing-wax to resemble inlaid work; and these were also offered for sale, to enable the hungry manufacturers to fill what might almost be called an aching void, were not their stomachs

so full of hunger. It was an obdurate guard indeed who was not willing to trade for "Yankee traps," when brought out in the shape of red-top Yankee boots, watches, or first-class jack-knives.

The prison ground consisted of a low, sandy point of land extending towards, and in sight of, Richmond. Its area at this period was defined by a low railing three feet or more in height, which the prisoners were allowed to approach, but not to cross without permission. This line was not a "dead line," as that refinement of prison rules was reserved for a different era of Confederate prisons. On three sides of this flat area ran the coffee-colored James River, dashing against the little, verdure-clad islets and the rocks which stood in its path, as if in wrath at such intrusion.

The railing mentioned was from twenty to thirty yards from the river on the south and east, while a much wider space intervened on the north. This northern part was often completely inundated during or after rainy weather. Thus, while three sides might be said to be guarded by the river, a high bluff or hill in the rear marked the western limit of our prison. Here the guards had their camps, "roosting high," as Jed remarked sarcastically, and out of sight of the "Yanks." Jed informed me that there was a fort on the hill, which guarded the western approaches to the rebel capital.

The banks of the island opposite Richmond were fringed with graceful foliage, with here and there

a magnolia tree, overhanging the swift current, the fragrance of whose blossoms occasionally came to us, in marked contrast to the unsavory odors of the prison. Opposite, on the Richmond side, were iron-works where, in the afternoon, workmen could be seen and heard testing cannon made for the armies of the Confederacy.

Each day there came from the city to us, a huge scow loaded with bread, and with unpainted wooden boxes, to be used as coffins for the deceased prisoners. This uncouth ferry-boat, with its ominous cargo, seemed like some ark on the waters of the River of Death, freighted to show the possibilities of our future.

One afternoon during the month of August I sat watching the spires and roofs of the rebel capital, which were bathed in sunset hues, against a background of beautiful clouds. From the city came dimly the sounds of busy life. These sights and sounds filled me with an inexpressible longing for home. Whether these feelings were reflected in my face, I do not know, but Jed sitting near me inquired, —

"What are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking," I replied wearily, "how beautiful it looks over there in Richmond. It must be a pleasant place to live in. I'd like to be free to look it over."

"Inviting to the eye, but ashes to the touch," said Jed musingly; "it might be called the City

of Sorrow. Many mothers there have lost their sons; and from all over the South those who have fathers, brothers, husbands, or sons in the army come with aching hearts searching for their missing ones. Arriving, they often learn that they are sick, wounded, or dead. I have seen the most terrible agony of dread on the faces of women.

"Almost all the public buildings, factories, and warehouses, as well as many of the private residences, are either hospitals or prisons, in which are confined not only Yankee prisoners, but many brave Union men, or suspected citizens of the South. The South is already destitute of luxuries, and, in a great part, of necessities and comforts. In the hospitals, pieces of carpeting, tablecloths, home-made blankets and comforters made of cotton cloth with wadding of cotton sandwiched between, are used for blankets. Herbs have taken the place of ordinary drugs. Quinine cannot be had, except in very small quantities, at any price. In its houses destitution is the rule, and comfort the exception. The people have become distrustful of Confederate money, and the fractional scrip of towns outside of Richmond can hardly be forced upon them. It already takes a hatful of money to purchase a small basket of provisions.

"Any one having a printing-press can make money of small denomination which passes current as well as any, but a knowledge of this fact

deepens the distrust prevalent on every side. A Confederate dollar buys an ordinary loaf of wheat bread which can be purchased for ten cents at the North. Those who have specie hoard it."

"If that is true, I should think the South would be tired of the war," I said. Jed shook his head, and replied, —

"You don't understand these people; I didn't at first. Under much that is extravagant in statement and sentiment, — under all their swagger, there is a deep-set pride and determination. The Southerners will suffer everything rather than yield to the Yankees, whom they detest and hate. They have the virtues of those who are comparatively primitive in their habits of life. I cannot help respecting their soldiers, who stand up bravely and take cold lead for what they believe to be right; or their citizens, who, when put to the test, suffer every inconvenience of poverty and want, that the army may be fed and clothed and kept in the field. I sometimes feel that the Southerners are a braver and more consistent people than we Northerners. Our army couldn't be held together under such conditions of pay and rations: they would revolt and go home."

And then, as if ashamed of his earnestness, Jed added with a change of face and tone, in droll imitation of one of the Confederate guard whom he sometimes mimicked, —

"We uns will be right glad when you'ns have

been licked! What do you'ns come down here to fight we uns for?"

It was an old characteristic of Jed to cover his more earnest and thoughtful moods by a veil of humor.

In the few months since Jed had come into the enemy's lines, he had grown more earnest and thoughtful; every night I saw him kneel in prayer, and on his bronzed face was stamped that composure by which an observer may recognize those who have been constantly in places of peril.

"I shall be glad when I get away from this and take my place in the army once more," I said after a moment's pause.

Jed reflected a moment, and then said, "I too shall be glad to get into our lines, but as yet I am undecided what to do. I have probably been missed by the rebels by this time. The only chance I have of not being detected is in the slipshod manner in which the business of the Confederate army is managed."

"There must be a great deal of danger to you here," I replied.

Jed's voice deepened with earnestness as he replied, "Yes! there is danger everywhere in the army to men who do their duty, but a man's danger is always increased by losing his nerve. If he keeps his eyes open there are chances to escape from the worst situations."

Shortly after the foregoing conversation I was

endeavoring to sell or trade a forage cap to the Confederate guard. To secure the trade, as there was some hesitation on the part of the young fellow to pay so much as twenty-five dollars, even in Confederate money, I made a pencil sketch of him with the cap on, and held the drawing up for him to see how he looked with the new article of dress. Though the drawing was something of a caricature of a portrait, the Confederate soldier was more struck by the picture than by the cap.

"What'll ye take for that Yankee fixin'?" he inquired.

I replied unblushingly, "Five dollars."

After I had written his name, company, and regiment on it he paid the price asked, and seemed delighted with the picture.

After this I could afford to cheapen the cap; we speedily closed the trade, and I walked off twenty-five dollars richer in Confederate money.

This little incident, seemingly so unimportant, bore fruits out of proportion to the incident itself. The Confederate guard showed his picture to his comrades, and I soon found myself busy in making alleged likenesses of Confederate soldiers of the guard, at good prices.

The sergeant of the guard, whose picture I had made, passed me in and out to the camp south of the prison, and introduced me to the guard who succeeded him. Pones of Indian cake, bacon, and other delicacies, as well as Confederate money,

were given me in exchange for my pictures. Under these drawings I often scribbled verses from Moore for those who wished to send them to their wives and sweethearts, and by this means I got enough to eat.

While at the guard-quarters one day a request came from one of the men for a picture. I did not then know the insignia of rank in the Confederate army, and, as my subject had no shoulder-straps, I supposed him to be a private, or, at most, a sergeant. The insignificant stripes of gold braid on his collar I supposed meant nothing more than an ambitious attempt at ornament, so common among the Confederate soldiers I had met. The soldier was well educated, and once, when I wished to sharpen my pencil, I said carelessly, "Let me take your knife." He corrected my English by saying, "No, I will not let you 'take my knife,' but I will *loan* you my knife." By dint of care I really made a creditable likeness of him, with which he appeared pleased.

As was my custom, upon finishing it I asked him if I should put his name, rank, and company under it. "No," said he, as he took my pencil from my hand, writing his name in a beautiful round hand, and adding "Captain of Company —, 22d Ala."

I asked him why he did not wear shoulder-straps, whereupon he pointed out the difference between the "old army," as he called it, and the Confederate manner of designating rank. He was a manly fellow, with a certain dignity which he wore easily

Belle Isle in 1862: Making the portrait.—Page 184.

and lightly, as if habituated to command. He never spoke to his men above the ordinary tones of conversation, and in this he was like West Point officers I had encountered. This was so striking that I mentioned it.

"Very naturally," he replied; "I was in West Point, and but for this unfortunate war should have graduated. You have the manners of a man who has seen much service," said he, "though you are but young."

I explained this by giving him an outline of my service in the army previous to the war.

"I'd like to take you up to camp with me very much," said he, making a gesture towards the hill at the west of the prison camp.

"I am afraid they wouldn't like it up there," I replied.

"Oh, yes, they would. I'd see to that," he replied.

I did not then understand the bearing of his remarks, but the next day I was telling the incident to Jed, when, noticing a quizzical expression on his face, I said, "What is it? Out with it, Jed. What are you laughing in your sleeve at me for?" I was not prepared for Jed's reply.

"Didn't you understand he was trying to recruit you for the Confederate army?" It flashed upon me now for the first time, and, to put it mildly, I was astonished at the officer's assurance.

"I know the man very well," said Jed, "and his

estimate of a Yankee is so low that he will not easily give over trying to recruit you for the Confederate service. If you go over to the camp he will accept it as a token that you are considering the matter, and if you keep away he will send into camp for you, and my safety will be endangered. If he remembers the story I told of my previous service he may connect you with me; and, even if he does not, it is likely to be dangerous for me here."

Seeing a shadow of chagrin come over my face, Jed put his hand affectionately on my shoulder and said, "Don't put on that blue look, Dick. It is all for the best, for had I not known of this regiment being on guard I was likely to betray myself. 'Forewarned, forearmed,' as your aunt used to say when you first insisted on being friends with me."

This little bit of reminiscence made me laugh, as my aunt, at my first acquaintance with Jed, usually accompanied this saying with ominous predictions of his future career.

"It is fortunate," continued Jed, "that this fact is known to me before I commit myself, for it has been rumored for some days that there is to be a parole of prisoners, and I intended, in that event, to fall in and give my parole with the others and run the risk; but this puts it out of the question. I must take some other course."

"What will you do?" I inquired, but Jed made

no other reply than to smile and shake his head as if he had not really made up his mind on that point.

As Jed had predicted, the captain did not give up the plan he had formed to recruit me for the Confederate service. He promised to obtain for me a commission, and argued that the Confederacy would soon be acknowledged by England and France, if it was not already, "and then every man who fights for us will be made independent." My decided but good-natured answers that "I was born a Yank, and intended to die a Yank," made it hard for him to urge me further.

I reported this conversation to Jed, who said, —

"That is the best way; if you gave him any encouragement it would make it disagreeable for you."

In a few days after this, the expected parole of prisoners really began. I was called out to write on the parole papers, and on returning in the evening found that Jed had disappeared from camp.

He had left a note for me with a mutual acquaintance; I opened it, and read, —

DEAR DICK, — Don't be uneasy or worried about me. The less you inquire for me or look after me, the better.

JED.

I turned away, heavy-hearted at thoughts of marching to our lines on the morrow, leaving Jed in the hands of the enemy.

The paroles were all completed by nine o'clock

the next morning. I was standing at the place where I had been writing, near a one-story building, previous to the war a church, but now used for a commissary office. I met the captain of the 22d Alabama, who shook hands with me, and said, —

"Since you won't be a Confederate I am glad, for your sake, you are going home."

Just then I heard what I thought was Jed's voice, saying, "Yes, we are going to our lines." I turned, and near me stood a broad-shouldered, dark-whiskered fellow with an empty sleeve, who, in reply to a question I put to him, said in unmistakable Irish brogue, —

"Sure it's glad I am to be going to the Union!"

We began our march; passed through Manchester, where sad-faced women came out from their homes, and gave us cakes, and filled our canteens, and spoke kind words; passed through Richmond, with its now silent and almost deserted streets, and after a hard all-day's march reached Aiken's Landing, in sight of the flag-of-truce boat, from which floated the stars and stripes.

Though no rations had been issued to us during the entire day, we here received a plentiful supply, and were contented to look up to the dear old flag, never so dear as now, while tears ran down faces unused to tears, from simple joy at being delivered from our prison.

On the afternoon of the next day we landed at Annapolis, and were marched to parole camp.

Here I took up my quarters near a sutler's shop. I had but few acquaintances among the prisoners, and by reason of my long imprisonment was destitute of many necessities to make me comfortable.

As I stood doubtfully musing, a voice like Jed's aroused me from my reverie. Looking up, I saw the Irish soldier standing before me.

"It's a foine thing to be once more in the Union, sor," said he.

"Yes, Pat," said I, "but"—and here I looked around. "I could almost swear I heard a friend's voice just now!"

"And faith ye did, me bye!" said the supposed Irishman; throwing back his coat-collar which he had worn turned up, and coolly removing a false beard, to my astonishment, Jed stood before me. I held out my hand, when from under his coat, where dangled an unfilled coat-sleeve, he extended his hand to meet mine.

Our army at this time was at Antietam, and Jed, who the next morning got an interview with the colonel commanding the camp, was soon on his way to Washington, with important information which he had gained within the rebel lines.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE PAROLE CAMP.

AT the time of my arrival at the parole camp my clothing was very ragged and dirty; the natural results of being in the Confederacy nearly four months without change of garments. An Irish comrade not inaptly described my costume as "principally composed of fresh air."

My chief ambition at that time was to expel certain familiar invaders from my clothing, and to obtain an army blanket.

Here let me explain that a ragged soldier was treated with as much discourtesy as a ragged citizen.

If better dressed men listened to statements from such at all, it was with incredulity, as if the fact of their raggedness was discreditable beyond explanation, and that the only acceptable apology for such a condition was a speedy change to a new or a better suit. Hence though the facts which led to my poverty were in no wise discreditable to me, yet, as I could not conveniently convene a court of inquiry to show that I was guiltless of malice aforethought, that poverty brought me into discredit. I visited the quarters of the colonel com-

manding the camp, and requested that I might be supplied with clothing. The response was, that no such supplies had been issued to that camp.

I had written to my aunt that I had reached our lines from the rebel prisons, and needed money, but received no reply for many days. At the thought that my friends, even, had deserted me, I became despondent.

The food provided for the parole camp was such as is usually issued to soldiers, but the craving for luxuries was now as great as hitherto the desire had been for necessities.

The want of respect shown me, even by my ragged associates, chagrined and angered me. I could not understand why I was not entitled to the same consideration among my fellows as when my uniform was bright and clean, and my position assured.

I was in this vexed and fretful mood when, on my way to the commanding officer's quarters to plead again for blankets and clothing, I noticed before me a tall, ragged, angular soldier, whose gait and manner seemed familiar. I was cudgelling my brain to establish some connecting link of acquaintance between this person and myself, when he arrived at the colonel's office, and burst out in a roar of indignant inquiry, —

"See here, air you the colonel?"

"Yes: what is it you wish, my man?" said that personage, in sharp and forbidding tones.

"What do I want? Why, colonel, I want most everything! I've been kicked around in this place nigh on to three weeks. I want some clothes and a blanket, and I want to get home or go to my regiment. I'll be blamed if I don't want everything, from the foundation to the upper story, and this is the wust place to 'git 'em' I ever see."

The manner of the speaker was so ludicrous and impatient, and his growl of complaint so thunderous, that I could not help laughing heartily, notwithstanding the sympathy I had felt on account of the similarity of our errand and condition, and more especially as I recognized him as Sonny, the dismounted cavalryman, whom I have more than once mentioned in this narrative.

There was no satisfaction to be had from the colonel, as it was plain he could not give us what he did not himself possess. He had been so much annoyed by similar requests that he was not very sweet in his replies to ragged applicants.

The government was at this time endeavoring to supply the "Army of the Potomac" with clothing, of which they were sadly in need after the battle of Antietam, and so but little heed was paid to those who (like ourselves) were not in active service.

Sonny recognized me at once, and as we turned away he growled in his deepest bass, —

"This is Camp Destitution, this is!"

On my remarking that I thought there was enough to eat, he assented, saying, —

"Yes, enough of common stuff, sich as hard-tack and pork, but after a man has been in Libby Prison he sort o' wants some fine grub to fill up the chinks with. This is a tough place to get anything. I can't git a letter from hum, and can't git no clothes and no nuthin'!"

I told Sonny that I had been unable to get any money, or even replies to my letters. "I believe some one up to the camp post-office steals the letters that have money in them," said Sonny.

I had never thought of this before, but was half inclined to believe that Sonny's view was correct, and this suggested a new idea to me.

"Why not write and have our letters addressed to us at Annapolis, instead of the parole camp?" I said.

"Well, now, that's a good idea," said Sonny, looking skyward, as if it had something to do with the weather instead of the mails.

"I'll write right off." So as Sonny had a little money, which he proposed to share with me in the venture, we bought paper, envelopes, and postage stamps at the sutler's; we wrote our letters, and mailed them at the camp post-office.

I was about to part with Sonny when he inquired, —

"Where are yer stoppin'?"

I told him, and he accompanied me to my quar-

ters, which were in an A tent occupied in common with several other ex-prisoners.

"Sho!" said Sonny, contemptuously viewing the premises, "I can beat this. I've got a tent, an old overcoat, and a ragged blanket, and all to myself."

I inquired how it happened that he occupied a tent alone.

"Well, you see, my chums complained when they was put into the same tent with me. I'd got to double up like the letter Z, or leave my legs outdoors in the cold; and when I *did* double up like the last of the A B C's, I lay sort of zig-zag acrost the hull tent," said Sonny, with a wink and a grin which suggested that he could have improved the situation if he had tried.

"I should have thought they would have kicked you out," said I.

"Wall, they did try it," said Sonny, and then relapsed into silence, as if he preferred to let the fact of his possession of the tent tell its own story.

So I took up my quarters with Sonny, and a better-hearted or more genial comrade I could not have wished.

"I've got some sweet potatoes and chicken for dinner," said Sonny, on the day I joined my fortunes with his.

"How did you buy them?" I inquired, amazed at such wealth.

"Buy!" exclaimed Sonny, in a tone of derision.

"Why, bunkie, there's splendid foraging 'mong these 'secesh' around here."

As I made no answer Sonny continued, "You see, with most of our boys, every one who has got chickens or such things is a 'secesh,' but I believe in makin' some difference. I don't mean to touch a thing that I know belongs to a Union man. I don't say I ain't liable to mistakes, though, when I am awful hungry. But when I know a man is a rebel I don't care a bit what I take from his farm; leastwise," said Sonny (with a qualifying clause), "if he don't use his shotgun too promiscuously. I am going out to git some sweet 'taters to-night. There's an old fellow out here that's the most outrageous 'secesh' there is in the county, and he keeps a shotgun, tew, and threatens to shoot the fust Yank that dares dig a 'tater or touch a chicken on his place. If you'll go out with me we'll have some fun."

I confess I could not see much fun in the programme outlined; besides, I had conscientious scruples against getting potatoes in this manner. But hunger is a powerful incentive, and often furnishes more arguments for evil-doing than it gets credit for. So as night came on, half hesitating, I started out with Sonny for the sweet-potato field. I had one haversack, but Sonny had two.

It was evening when we arrived at the scene of our adventures. The planter's house stood on a hill, while in the intervale below, a short distance

from the road, there were one or two acres of sweet-potato vines.

It was quite dark as we began silently and stealthily to fill our haversacks. I had almost forgotten my objections to this method of procuring supplies, when my conscience was suddenly restored by the report of a double-barrelled shotgun.

Not desiring any further statement of the owner's wishes regarding his sweet potatoes, I at once took to the road and travelled, but Sonny obstinately refused to accompany me, saying he would meet me on the cross-road.

The cross-road was about a mile from the scene of the encounter, but the frequent reports of the planter's shotgun assisted me to reach it in a very short time.

On my arrival I kindled a fire, with rails for fuel, and awaited anxiously the return of Sonny.

The soldiers of the army, while prompted by hunger to forage in this manner, were in the habit of reasoning that they were in an enemy's country, and therefore had a right to confiscate provisions; while, if among friends, the soldiers considered themselves their defenders, and thus entitled to as much as they needed.

The loose joint in this iron-clad reasoning was, that the exponents of these views preferred "darkness rather than light," while availing themselves of their assumed rights.

I was in the midst of reflections of this character, and was in the act of depositing some sweet potatoes in the ashes to cook, when Sonny came up with his face covered with blood, but with both haversacks bulging out with provender.

I uttered a loud exclamation at sight of his bloody face, which Sonny calmly explained by saying, "That old scamp filled me with pigeon-shot. I believe I should have run if I hadn't been under fire before. I'll git even with him. I won't leave a sweet potato nor a chicken on his place."

"Don't you think, Sonny, that we were really stealing those potatoes?" I inquired.

"Sho! how you talk! We were foraging, — sort of informally, of course, — and if that ole feller can prove a claim, and prove his loyalty alongside of his claim, he can collect his bill of Uncle Sam just as slick as grease."

"Well," argued I, "Uncle Sam provides us with rations, and, according to your views, he is liable to pay an additional bill for these potatoes. If we have got justice on our side, why not go by daylight and help ourselves?"

"Well," said Sonny, "I usually go in the night to save time, and because it isn't best to harrow up these rebs' feelings needlessly. We air commanded to love our enemies. I find it purty hard work to do that, since I come out of Libby Prison, so I come as near to it as possible, and love their chickens and sweet potatoes. Yer can't expect a man who

is just out of their miserable holes to do more than that, can yer?"

This speech was followed by a low, hoarse chuckle, not unlike distant thunder, which showed that Sonny was arguing more for fun than from conviction.

That night we slept under a haystack, and in the morning Sonny was scarcely able to walk, because of a pigeon shot which had lodged under his kneepan. This prevented his getting around camp much for several weeks.

There were about two thousand men in the parole camp at Annapolis, at this time. Up to this period, we had been allowed to visit the city, which was not more than a mile and a half from camp.

Now, however, a new sutler with a large stock of goods had built a long, low building, one part of which was a dining-room, and the other a store or salesroom. Whether by arrangement with the colonel or by some strange coincidence, all passes to go to town were then cut off; a strict guard was established around the camp, and the prices at the sutler's were made almost double those formerly asked; and as a consequence, the paroled prisoners were as angry as hornets.

Sonny, who, cut off from foraging, was now oppressed with more than his usual hunger, having in some unexplained way got a dollar, declared his intention of having "one good square meal" at the sutler's.

Some twenty minutes after Sonny entered the sutler's, we saw him being forcibly ejected. He was very angry, and excitedly explained that he had sat down to eat after paying a dollar for his dinner, and that some officers had come in and seated themselves at the same table, and then he had been told he could not eat at the same table with officers.

"I said to that sutler man, 'Ain't that dollar a good one?' he said, 'Yes.' 'Well then, I'm going to have a dinner!' and," continued Sonny, roaring oratorically, "I'm a son of Maine, a freeman, and a soldier of the Union, and was choked off at that 'shebang' in the act of eating a chicken!"

Sonny was hot and angry, and his anger was contagious; as he had been abused by a common enemy, — the sutler, — he soon had many champions, and the sutler many enemies. One of the former made a furious speech, telling the incident of Sonny's ejection after paying for a dinner, and before eating it. The crowd became furious, and, turning upon the sutler's shop, tore it down, distributing its contents in less time than it has taken me to write about it.

The Pennsylvania Reserves, who made up the camp guard, were brought out and ordered to fire, but it did no good. They understood the situation, and were in sympathy with the ex-prisoners. One of them would say in loud tones, to a prisoner with a box of tobacco, "Drop that, you scoundrel,

you!" and then in lower tones would add, "Put some in my pocket."

Sonny got enough of these goods to appease any ordinary anger, but he still bewailed his loss, that, in the act of eating a chicken, he had been kicked out of the sutler's dining-room.

He was going on in this way when I ventured to suggest that perhaps he had already eaten a dollar's worth before they invented an excuse to choke him off. Sonny protested that he "Hadn't scarcely eaten nuthin' when the rumpus begun! There was about half a pot of beans, and a loaf of brown bread, and butter, and a few such things that I had eaten, and had just got down to solid work on that chicken when they choked me off." And as Sonny showed symptoms of getting angry, I dared not quiz him any more.

Thinking it was about time for the letters which I had asked to have directed to Annapolis, to arrive, I applied for a pass to go to the city. It was refused. I was told that I could give orders to have my letters sent to the camp post-office.

That night I "ran the guard," reached Annapolis, and slept under a shed near the wharf until morning. I then went to the post-office, but found it closed. I inquired of a soldier why the office was not open. He laughed, and replied laconically, "Sunday." So much had one day been like another, in parole camp as well as in prison, that I had lost my reckoning of the days of the week.

I was hungry, and not knowing where my breakfast was coming from, I nervously walked the streets, planning what to do next.

Thus meditating, I ran against an officer who was hobbling up the street on crutches, and almost knocked him off his feet. I turned to apologize, when I found myself face to face with Captain Gruff. I was so overjoyed at sight of him, that I could only hold out my hands and cry like a child.

He put his hand into his pocket, and answered my appeal by handing me some fractional currency, which was then in use. He did not know me.

"Soldier, vat is the matter?" interrogated the old soldier, in his stern, military tones.

"Don't you know me, Captain Gruff? Don't you know Dick Nickerson?" I exclaimed.

The captain recognized my voice, and his whole manner changed; something rose up in his throat and choked his voice, while tears came to his eyes, as he said,—

"My poor poy, my poor poy! too pad, too pad! Vat have they done to you?"

I briefly told him my story and Jed's.

"Vell, Dick, you must have somethin' to vare first, and then somethin' to eat," and with this he hurried me around a corner where a Jew was keeping open shop, thrust a roll of bills into my hand, and, giving me directions to find his quarters at

the Naval Hospital, he started off to get me up a spread, or, as he called it, a "goot tinner."

I bought a fine suit of citizen's clothes, including shirts, collar and neck-tie, boots, and a nice forage cap, such as officers wear, — the only article of military goods in his shop, — and with these in a bundle I went to a hotel where a barber's shop and bathroom were open.

I first got a shave, had my hair cut, and then inquired, "Can I get a bath?" and received the answer, "Yes, if you can pay in advance for it."

I think I never enjoyed anything more than that bath. I rolled my old rags into a bundle, got into my new suit, and was my old self again. How glorious to be clean and well dressed!

The clothes fitted me nicely, and as I once more entered the main room to view myself in the glass, the proprietor bowed to me respectfully, saying, "The price of your bath, sir, if you please."

"I paid for it in advance, as you requested," I replied.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, amazed at my transformation, "you are not the man who went into No. 7, are you?"

Bowing my acknowledgment of the fact, I went on my way to Captain Gruff's quarters, impressed for the first time at the power of dress among men.

Captain Gruff was pleased with my appearance, and introduced me to his friends. After dinner I narrated my experience and adventures, and the

noble part Jed had taken in my rescue from sickness and death at Belle Isle.

Captain Gruff's eyes filled with tears, and his ordinarily firm hand trembled as he filled his pipe, while he exclaimed, "Ah, dot Jed! He's a fine poy, a fine poy. He saves me from being one hog of a trunkard. Shentlemen, I loves dot poy, and dot's de reason I vill not trink mit you sometimes ven you asks me. I feel as if I could not look into dot poy's goot eyes if I tid."

There was not an officer at the table but that respected him for this, for the silent tribute of a tear was seen on their faces at the touch of nature in the brave old soldier, who, even in the midst of carnage, danger, and death, seldom showed emotion.

The captain now told me his experience at the second battle of Bull Run. The regiments under Hooker had attacked Jackson in the railroad cut, and there he had been wounded.

He told me that my aunt had written to him at different times to make inquiries for me, and that her grief was very great at my being a prisoner. "And, Dick, dot leetle voman has lost all her money vich she invested mit dot Squire Weston," said Gruff pathetically.

I was a different person, in my own estimation, as I retraced my steps towards parole camp the next morning. Walking up to the colonel's quarters, I saluted that officer, who did not recognize in me the ragged suppliant who had besieged his

quarters for a month past. He arose, shook my hand cordially, and invited me to take a seat in his office.

"I am a paroled prisoner, colonel, but do not wish to take up my quarters among the other dirty prisoners."

He was kind enough to appreciate my feelings, and invited me to accept a blanket in his own tent. I not only accepted this offer, but also that of a clerkship offered me in the office.

Not long after I had been installed as clerk, I heard the familiar voice of Sonny, deep and vibrant as thunder. "Say, Cap, ain't I never goin' to git a blanket nor nothin'?"

Seeing that he did not recognize me, I could not resist having some fun at his expense. So I replied, "There's an old man about three miles from here, up the Baltimore road, who says that a big fellow with two haversacks has carried off a lot of his sweet potatoes, and some of his pigeon shot."

Sonny's amazement can better be imagined than described. His confusion was so great that he could hardly speak, but he finally burst out with the exclamation, "It's a thunderin' lie, Cap. I ain't touched a sweet potato belonging to no one, — leastwise, none of any good Union man; besides, I'm lame, and couldn't git eout to a potato patch if I tried."

"At what battle were you wounded?" I inquired.

"During the Peninsula fights I was wounded

and tuck prisoner." All of which the reader knows to be true.

"Was that where you got that pigeon shot under your knee?" I inquired gravely.

To see Sonny's mouth open, and eyes protrude, in amazement was too much for my gravity. When I could control my face again I said, "Don't mind my teasing, Sonny. Here is an order for a suit of clothes and a blanket. Some clothing came in this morning, and this is the first order issued."

Sonny then recognized me, but could hardly believe his senses. "Gosh!" he said, "how did you 'ring in' with the colonel and get your meetin' clothes? Say, Dick, put me up to it, and I'll git some tu."

If I did not help Sonny in this way, I did in others, such as giving his chronic hunger a chance at the colonel's cook's quarters, and loaning him money.

On my visits to Captain Gruff at the Naval Hospital he urged me to go home as soon as I could get a furlough, and attend to my aunt's affairs. I had written to her again shortly after meeting Captain Gruff, and had received a reply saying that she had sent money to me at the parole camp after receiving my first letter, but that she had not sent much, as she had but very little. She had intrusted all her money to Squire Weston, for which she had taken no receipt, and since then the squire had declared that she had not deposited a cent in his hands for investment.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON FURLOUGH AT HOME.

SOON after the incidents recorded in the fore going chapter, I received a letter from Jed, informing me that he was in the parole camp near Alexandria, Va. When, a little later, a large number of our prisoners were transferred to that camp, I obtained permission to go with them, and was soon with Jed again.

The parole camp at Alexandria was situated on the level plain northwest of, and near, the city. It was well kept, and was often visited by the women of the "Sanitary Commission," who furnished the newly arrived and ragged prisoners with needed articles of clothing, and sometimes with luxuries in the way of food. Jed was very enthusiastic in his praise of these women, whose devotion to suffering soldiers was so much in contrast with the selfish sentiments of many he had encountered around Washington.

"To be a Christian," said Jed thoughtfully, when speaking of these women, "is to be Christ-like; and to be like Him is to forget one's self in care and love for others. When we really love

Him it is natural to forget ourselves, because that love is so great there is no room for any other love;" and as Jed continued speaking, his face shone with the transfiguring light of the Master's love.

I showed Jed my aunt's letter, and it was agreed that if possible we would obtain furloughs and go home to see our friends, and call Lawyer Weston to an account for the loss of my aunt's money.

Aunt Tempy's letters gave us a confused and what Jed termed a "mixed account" of her affairs, as if she hardly understood in what manner or for what purposes she had intrusted her money to Squire Weston.

That very day we each made an application for a thirty days' furlough, which was indorsed by the colonel commanding, and forwarded to Washington, with the recommendation that it be granted.

We waited anxiously three weeks, when our applications came back to headquarters with various indorsements in red and black ink across the folded document, and looking, Jed laughingly declared, as if the entire clerical force of the War Department had been put at work upon it.

The principal indorsement on each, however, was, "The within application for a furlough cannot be granted, as the within-named soldier is a 'paroled prisoner of war.'"

We did not understand the significance of this indorsement, except that our request was refused;

and we were discussing the probable meaning of the refusal, somewhat loudly, after the manner of boy soldiers, when a rough-featured captain, whom we recognized as being connected with the camp, stopped and inquired in pleasant tones, —

"What is it, boys?"

Jed showed him the document, and asked, —

"Does the fact of our being paroled prisoners debar us from receiving a furlough?"

"Why, as near as I can understand the matter," said Captain Jones, "the cartel or agreement now in force between the Confederates and the United States is, that no exchange of prisoners among those paroled is to take place until the government holding the smallest number has swapped all the prisoners they have on hand; the balance of the prisoners in the hands of the other government are paroled or turned over to the parties they belonged to, and held, as it were, in trust, and to be fed and cared for, until declared exchanged by both parties.

"Our position is this; the Confederates had more prisoners than the United States, and the paroled prisoners, here and elsewhere, represent that surplus, for which the United States are responsible to the so-called Confederate government."

"Then we've got to stay here until 'Uncle Sam' can catch enough rebs to swap for us?" said Jed.

"Yes, that's exactly it!" said the captain, smiling.

"What regiment do you belong to?" inquired the captain.

We told him, at which he said, "It was one of the best regiments in the service."

"I don't know that I want to go back to my regiment anyway, if it is a crack regiment!" said Jed, exchanging a glance with me.

A frown came over the captain's face, as he roughly responded, "I suppose you mean to shirk or desert, then?"

I explained to him Jed's situation, — that he had been in the enemy's lines for information, and that it had been debated between us whether it was best for him to go back to his old regiment or get transferred to some other.

"Oh! I see," said the captain, smiling once more, "if he is captured while belonging to the same regiment he might be identified as a spy and hanged! Come into my regiment, boys, if you can get your transfer; good regiment! and I'm going back to my company as soon as I'm exchanged."

"I have not decided," replied Jed: "there's danger to every one who does his duty in the army, and it makes but little difference where we fall."

"Ah!" said the captain, "a man never loves his country so dearly as when he constantly puts himself up to be shot for her; and we seem to love a cause just in proportion to what we give to it."

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he

giveth his life for another," softly repeated Jed with that self-communing look, which at times seemed to come from a light within, upon his face.

"Humph!" said the captain gruffly. "There is no one I should like to fight as well as I do these rebs; I'm not bloodthirsty, but I feel as if I were fighting for the Union and in God's service," and the captain turned away.

It was in December that we were declared exchanged, and ordered to report for duty with our regiment, now lying at Falmouth, before Fredericksburg.

"This won't do," said Jed; "there's not likely to be any fighting during the winter months, and we must get a furlough to see to your aunt's affairs."

"'Must' is a good word, but 'How,' armed with an interrogation point, stands on guard," I responded.

"I'm acquainted with Secretary Stanton; he's a first-rate man, and I think he will do something for us if I ask him," said Jed simply.

I turned to Jed to see whether he was demented or joking, for this was the first time he had mentioned the great Secretary of War. Jed then explained to me that, on leaving Annapolis, he had had an interview with Secretary Stanton, who had treated him very kindly, and, as Jed said, had asked him more questions than Captain Gruff asked from the manual in the "School of the Soldier."

We obtained a pass to go to Washington to get

from the War Department, if possible, the required furlough. A guard stood at the door of the War Office, and halted us as we approached.

"No one allowed to pass here," crisply explained the guard, in answer to our questions.

"I want to see the Secretary of War," said Jed.

"Piles of people been here saying the same thing," replied the guard, as stiffly as his Western manners would allow.

Just then a man rushed by us, who was halted as peremptorily as we had been, by the sentry interposing his musket in front of him.

"Let me pass," angrily roared the man, in a deep voice.

The person thus brought to bay was a short, stout old man, with a large head, and iron-gray hair and beard which bristled out at many angles, while every feature worked with irritable impatience.

Jed touched this man on the shoulder, and said respectfully, "I have come to see you again, sir."

The person thus addressed turned slowly towards Jed, as if in suppressed anger, but, to my surprise, on seeing Jed the expression of his face softened, as he extended his hand with a pleasant smile.

Turning to the sentinel, he said, in his deep tones, "I am the Secretary of War: let me pass with these gentlemen." The guard brought his musket to a salute, and we passed into the office.

The secretary turned to Jed, and impatiently, but without anger, said, "Where did you go a month ago, after leaving this office?"

"I gave you my information, then reported to the provost-marshal, who sent me to the parole camp at Alexandria. I have now returned to ask a favor for myself and friend," replied Jed gravely.

"Ask it," said the secretary pleasantly.

"We want a furlough."

Turning to me slowly, instead of replying to Jed, he brusquely asked, "What are you doing in citizen's clothes, sir?"

I explained to him my condition when I came from Belle Isle, and the impossibility of obtaining any clothing at the parole camp at Annapolis.

Dashing his glasses from his eyes with a gesture of impatience, he jerked at the bell-cord hanging from the ceiling of the office, which rang a noisy bell. An officer from an adjoining room answered the call, and to him the secretary gave orders for an inquiry to be made into the condition of prisoners at the parole camp at Annapolis.

The secretary then, without further notice of me, turned to Jed, and, putting his hand on his shoulder, said, "You are but a boy, but you have acted a man's part, and a brave one at that. I cannot do too much for brave boys like you. Your furloughs will be made out and forwarded to the parole camp at once."

We were soon at home. How familiar the streets looked as we passed on through the village! We reached my aunt's house and knocked. No response. We knocked still louder, but no answer came to our summons. We went around by the back veranda and peered into the kitchen windows. The kitchen was deserted, and no furniture or stove.

"She has moved," said Jed.

"Let us go over to Silas Eaton's and inquire," I suggested.

Here a stranger came to the door, and to all our qnestions replied, "Don't know."

We then started for the village to make inquiries. On our way a dog rushed out of a yard barking furiously, but suddenly ceased, and began leaping first on one and then on the other of us, with frantic whines and yelps. It was Mink. After caressing him with extravagant demonstrations, second only to those of the dog, Jed said, "If Mink came out of that house your aunt is there, too;" and we started up the yard, but before we could reach the door my aunt came rushing out of the house with her apron over her head, and almost rivalled Mink in her demonstrations of delight.

"Why don't you live in your own house?" I inquired of my aunt.

Pausing in her joyful congratulations she burst into tears, and began to "take on," as Jed called it.

It was some time before she could tell me her troubles.

She had mortgaged her house to Lawyer Weston, to get money to invest in bonds recommended by him. The mortgage had been foreclosed, and Squire Weston denied that he had ever received any money from her. He had not turned her out of her house, but had sent her word that she might live there free of rent, but this she had angrily refused to do.

"And," continued my aunt, "I took that check you sent to me, and hired this little cottage. I don't know what I should have done but for that money."

Jed glanced inquiringly at me, because he knew that I had not sent the check, as I had been paid off only three days previous to leaving the parole camp.

"How did the check come?" I inquired.

"In an envelope," replied my aunt, not seeming to notice the significance of my question, and she continued, —

"Here's the envelope; it wasn't nice in you, Dick, not to write when you sent the money."

We looked at the envelope, which was postmarked Annapolis. The writing, though like mine, was unmistakably that of Captain Gruff.

The generous old captain had sent the money which my aunt believed had come from me. We did not undeceive her, and she was so overjoyed at

our return that she did not notice the lameness of my reply.

The sentiment with which soldiers were regarded had changed since we were last in our little town. Then it was fashionable to pet and compliment them; at this stage of the war, however, soldiers had become too common to be looked upon as heroes, especially by those who were not a little ashamed that they had not illustrated their talkative patriotism by going to the front.

As we passed on to the principal business street of the village, a new shop with plate-glass windows arrested our attention. Looking up to the sign we read, "Silas Eaton, Ladies and Gents' Shoes." We entered and accosted the proprietor, who now wore a funereal suit of shining black clothes, and a stiff, laundried collar. Though Silas had left the shoe-bench, he was not changed for the better; his face had the same querulous snarled-up look — as Jed called it, and his manner was as dogmatic as usual.

"We didn't expect to find you at home, Silas!" I remarked. "We thought to find you planning campaigns and leading our soldiers at the front."

"No," said Silas, "I ain't gone yet, 'cause, ye see, I think I can do more good at home. I did have a kind o' notion of goin' out as an officer, 'cause the pay was good; but I got ter makin' money here like smoke, and I'm more use here than if I was fitin'."

"Whatever else has occurred," said Jed tartly, "you are neither an officer nor a [here he hesitated as if he had started to say gentleman] private."

"Du you think this war will hold on till spring?" inquired Silas.

I answered, "Yes."

"Well," said Silas, with a look of relief, "if it duz I shall be quite forehanded. You see that new house out there?" pointing to a large, pretentious residence. "Well, that house is mine, the next one tu it is Lawyer Weston's, and the 'tother one belongs to William Tucker, the shoe manufacturer. He's my partner, and we've got a profitable contract for shoes, so you see we do our part towards helpin' on the war."

"Yes," said Jed, "you combine profit with patriotism."

We afterwards learned that the firm used pasteboard, ground leather, and other shoddy stock in manufacturing soldiers' shoes, and in this manner they had made a fortune.

"How did you make your money?" inquired Jed.

"Well, we've manufactured shoes and have got tu or three other strings to our bow. Lawyer Weston, did you say? he's a sharp one; mustn't say nothin' against him, though; he's a forehanded, respectable man."

"He may be sharp," I replied, "but he does not give very good advice to his clients. My aunt

mortgaged her house and put the money into the squire's hands, and now she has lost her house, and the squire denies receiving her money."

"Wall, I heard somethin' about that; but the squire has allus been accounted honest, though he's sharp, and money will stick to his fingers. Men don't change their natures in a day, and the squire is honest. Say, yeou, didn't your aunt git a receipt from the squire?"

We replied that she did not.

"The only proof she's got is her own word, then, — well, Temperance Nickerson won't lie, and the squire is honest — don't see how it is," soliloquized Silas. "But when a man makes money, lots of folks stand ready to declare he made it cheatin'," he added, with a virtuous smirk on his querulous face.

Uncle John Warren, of whom mention has been made in a previous chapter, was esteemed a sound counsellor, and an honest, God-fearing man. As he was a former friend of my father I determined to consult him.

We found the old man in his sitting-room, and he welcomed us heartily. After hearing our story, he said in his deep, measured tones, —

"I do not see that anything can be done in this matter, until you have proof that the squire received your aunt's money, and then you must place your case in the hands of an honest man. The evidence is circumstantial, all except this direct

testimony of your aunt's, that she gave the money to Squire Weston. It is well known that she mortgaged her house on his advice, and you say you have her letter asking your opinion of the investment. My advice is for you to go to Squire Weston himself and see what he says. He has always been thought to be honest, though a hard man, who looked out for his own. The prevailing haste for wealth may have taken hold of the squire; for the Holy Writ says, 'a man can't serve God and Mammon.'"

The old man heard the story of our army experience with wonder and intense interest. Turning to Jed, he said, "So far as I can judge, you've been a brave soldier and a good boy. Be careful of your habits, and do not fall into evil ways. When you left home I hoped that you might become a true follower of Christ."

Jed gave briefly, in simple words, his religious experience.

Before we left, Uncle John stood and prayed, in his stately, solemn language, for the widows and orphans of soldiers, and for his afflicted country, and that God might guide and bless Abraham Lincoln, whom he had raised up as an instrument for its salvation.

How deep the words of a good man's prayer sink into the heart! . . .

On inquiring of my aunt, I learned that her two calls at Squire Weston's office had been made in

the evening, because that time suited her convenience, and gave the squire leisure to talk over business.

The next day Jed and I called on Lawyer Weston. As I entered the door the lawyer looked up from his desk, recognized us, and without the slightest embarrassment advanced with extended hand, saying, "Glad to welcome home our brave defenders, Mr. Nickerson. Ah!" —

Here the squire frowned, for, gravely looking in his face, I withheld my hand, saying, "What have you done with my aunt's money, Mr. Weston?"

The squire met my gaze unflinchingly, and with his steel-gray eyes fixed on mine, replied, "I held a mortgage on your aunt's house for money advanced by other parties. I foreclosed the mortgage, as the interest on the loan had more than eaten up the worth of the house. I have had no other money transactions with your aunt, though she claims she put money in my hands for investment at two different times. I never received the money. Your aunt is flighty: something wrong here," and the squire tapped his forehead significantly.

All this time Squire Weston met my eye like an honest, fearless man, and this was more convincing to me of his integrity than mere words.

Was my aunt really laboring under some mistake or hallucination? Pondering on these things, I visited Lawyer Robinson of the village, whose

sharp, fox-like visage mirrored his acuteness and sagacity.

After stating the case and answering all his questions, he dismissed me abruptly, saying, "Your aunt has no case, because she has no evidence that a court will consider. If Weston has acted the scamp, he has not left the bars down: he has put them all up behind him. I have always thought him an honest man; so does the community in which he has lived for a lifetime. You've no case against such a man with the evidence you now have."

I could not but admit that the lawyer was right. Squire Weston's well-known reputation for integrity, and his manner of meeting my inquiries, made me hesitate to believe him guilty. Yet my aunt had undoubtedly told the truth, "according to her light," as Silas Eaton expressed it.

During my stay at home I made no progress in clearing up the mystery. The squire's quiet denial was, as Jed termed it, a "knock-down," — "And you'll have to get evidence for crutches before you go into court."

Though I had formerly believed in the squire's guilt, I now began to surmise that under the whole affair there was some mystery.

Our thirty days' furlough passed rapidly, and we must leave once more for the army. The minister of the village church, a good man, who exhibited great interest in both Jed and myself, accompanied

us to the station. Uncle John was also present to see us off, as was also Squire Weston's pretty daughter, who had lately looked with favoring eyes upon the straight, manly, handsome Jed.

So with many "God bless you's," we were once more on our way to the front.

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE.

IN a few days we reached our regiment, then lying at Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg. Many changes had taken place during our absence. The ranks had been thinned by disease and battle. Our comrades had participated in the conflicts of Malvern Hill, the 2d Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, and the terrible struggle for Mayre's Heights, at Fredericksburg.

Captain Gruff, who had now recovered from his wound, had been advanced to the position of lieutenant colonel in command of the regiment.

Our old division commander, General Hooker, for whom I had been an orderly at the time of my capture, now commanded the army of the Potomac.

Colonel Gruff, as he was now called, endeavored to dissuade Jed from joining his own regiment, thinking it more prudent for him to be with some other, so that if taken prisoner he would be in less danger of being identified by his captors. Jed, however, respectfully declined to be transferred and said, —

"I ought to be allowed to do a little real fighting with my own regiment, so as to show that the

rumor that I deserted was false. Secretary Stanton offered me a commission and a transfer, but I want to serve with my own townspeople."

"But, Jed, my tear poy, if the rebs get you, ve all shall lose you. Deys not very careful vat dey do."

"No," growled "Long John Haskell," "I'm blanked if old Stonewall Jackson didn't fire chunks of railroad iron at us at Bull Run; they are awful careless."

But no remonstrance availed with Jed, who, like many amiable people, was very obstinate.

Shortly after his arrival, Jed was promoted to be a sergeant; my promotion to that rank had previously taken place. Jed's long absence from our ranks was now partly understood by the regiment, yet there were envious members who hinted that Jed was disloyal. Among these was Lieutenant Weston. This was very hard for Jed to bear, yet he made no denial by word or look, but simply said, "My life as a soldier will disprove these falsehoods."

An incident here occurred which illustrates the generous character of the Union soldier. Near the outposts there lived a crippled Confederate and his wife, to whom Jed often carried food and clothing. Osgood, who was now a corporal, and who thought he should have been promoted instead of Jed, insinuated that this was a method adopted by Jed to communicate with the enemy. One

day, however, Osgood stopped me as I was passing him, and said, —

"I want to make an acknowledgment, as every one should who has wronged a good man. I was prejudiced against Jed, but I was wrong in suspecting him."

"What has happened to change your opinion?" I inquired curiously.

"Well," said he, "Sutherland and I saw Jed going into that rebel's shanty, and we thought we would listen so as to get a twist on him."

"What did you hear?" I inquired, for I knew he could not have heard anything to Jed's discredit.

"I heard Jed say to that rebel, 'Here, Johnnie, here's all the money I've got; in a few days the spring campaign will probably open, and you'll have hard work to support yourself and family.'"

"What did the Confederate say?" I inquired, still curious, as Jed had told me nothing of this, although he had borrowed all my money.

"Why, that reb was all broke up; I could look through a chink of the logs and see the tears running down his face while he grasped Sergeant Jed's hand, and said, 'I'll be doggoned if I didn't believe Yanks had horns before you all come down here to fight; but now I've got no other friends.'—'Don't say you have no other friends,' said Jed, 'Jesus is the friend of all who are heavy

laden with sorrow;' and then, as I'm a sinner, if he didn't get down on his knees and pray for that reb and his family, until both the man and his wife cried like children, and I was all choked up too. I made up my mind I'd confess how mean I'd been, and I'm doing it as fast as I can."

Osgood told this incident everywhere, which, together with Jed's constant goodness, made him many friends. It also made friends for the crippled Confederate. So contagious is an act of kindness to an enemy, that every new picket shared their rations with him, split and carried wood to his hut, and heaped coals of fire on his hearth, if not on his head.

Constant parades, drills, and inspections on the plains of Falmouth soon heralded the approach of another campaign. The army under Hooker then numbered one hundred and twenty thousand men, and justified the boast of its commander that it was "the finest army on the planet."

April 27th we broke camp, and supplied with salt pork, hard-tack, sugar, and coffee for eight days' rations, began our march to turn the flank of the enemy.

Hooker had wisely determined not to repeat the fault of Burnside, in attacking the heights on his front. He left Sedgwick to occupy the enemy's attention, and to mask his movement on their flank. Making wide *détours* behind the hills, that the marching columns might not be perceived by

the foe, we reached the upper fords of the Rappahannock.

A small brigade of cavalry preceded us across the river, to clear our front. The rear of this column was just crossing as we reached the river. As we threw ourselves on the ground to rest, a tall cavalryman on a small horse hesitated on the bank, and soliloquized, —

"Well, old Joe Hooker remembered most everything, but he forgot to give us swimming lessons."

I at once recognized Sonny, the cavalryman, and, thinking to tease him, shouted, "Are you after more pigeon shot and sweet potatoes, Sonny?"

Sonny turned and recognized me, and, after shaking hands, rode into the rushing current, saying, "I'll meet you on the field of glory, Nickerson." He little thought in what a grotesque manner I should meet him before the campaign was over.

It was, as Sonny remarked, no fool of a job to cross this rapid river. Our men were, however, equal to the task. They stripped, and, placing their clothes and rations on their shoulders, with their cartridge-boxes on their heads to keep their ammunition dry, made the crossing with such laughter and jokes as often season the rough work of a soldier's life.

When darkness came on huge bonfires were kindled on the opposite banks, and all through

the night soldiers and pack-mules could be heard splashing in the chill waters of the Rappahannock.

At this point I met some prisoners who had been captured by our cavalry. One of them asked me, —

"What are you'ns goin' to do with all of your grub fixins?"

"Going to Richmond," I replied.

"I reckon you'll need rations for a hundred years before yer git there," replied the confident reb. "We like to have you Yanks have a lot o' good things, for when we git one of yous, we git watches, and boots, and a heap of fixins. Now, when you git a reb, yer don't git much o' anythin' else. Uncle Robert will gobble the hull of ye, and make yer march with them fixins to Richmond, I reckon."

Thus confident were the Confederate soldiers in their great commander.

An army of fifty thousand men was soon at Chancellorsville. Our army, heavy laden with rations and ammunition, had crossed two rivers and had marched forty miles in two days. We had turned the flank of the Confederate army, and it was no idle boast of General Hooker, that he held Richmond in one hand and Lee's army in the other, for the situation at that time justified the assertion.

Chancellorsville was not a town, but a solitary country house, surrounded by clustering negro quarters, standing in the midst of a large clearing, with dense thickets on every side, practically impenetrable for the manœuvres of an army.

It was not the original plan of our general to give battle here, but it was a convenient point from which to concentrate his troops four miles farther southeast at the United States Ford. This last position, if attained, would take the rebel lines in reverse, and if they retreated expose their flank and rear, while if they came out to attack us they would be obliged to accept battle in the open field.

Our left column moved out on the river road from Chancellorsville without encountering opposition until it came in sight of Banks's Ford. The divisions of Sykes and Hancock advanced on the turnpike, and had reached the first of a series of hills, where the advancing enemy was driven back.

The position on these ridges practically uncovered Banks's Ford, and shortened our communication with the force under Sedgwick (at Fredericksburg) by twelve miles.

It was expected that this advantageous position would be held at all hazards, when an order was received from General Hooker to fall back to Chancellorsville. Here, in this confined spot at the Chancellorsville clearing, we awaited the attack of the enemy.

Our lines were now about five miles in extent, reaching from a short distance east of Chancellorsville, to the westward in front of the Orange plank road.

Thus it was that the auspicious opening of the campaign was followed by a series of blunders, by

which all that this first brilliant movement promised was lost.

The position of Lee, meanwhile, was difficult, but he proved equal to the situation. Although his army was weakened by the absence of Longstreet's corps; yet, in the face of our superior force he divided his army, and sent Jackson around to attack our right flank, now resting on the Orange plank road.

Jackson reached the old turnpike, which runs parallel with, and north of, the plank road, from which point he could see our right (under command of Howard) in reverse. He now had only to advance to obtain a victory; for a force attacked in flank cannot fight, but are driven into huddles, where the men can only fire into each other.

The men of the 11th Corps were cooking their supper, when the blow fell upon them like lightning from a cloudless sky.

Our right wing was crushed and driven towards Chancellorsville, and disaster threatened the whole army. During the night, however, the tide of disaster was checked, and the bravest of the Confederate leaders, Stonewall Jackson, was killed.

So much must be said in explanation of what follows in our narrative.

Colonel Gruff had been much disgusted with the order to fall back, and growled out his displeasure.

We bivouacked that night near the Chancellor house.

Saturday morning, May 2d, dawned with a cloudless sky; but on our right and left the incessant "*Crack, crack, crack*," of the skirmishers, and the *ping* of bullets, sounded through the woods.

We left our knapsacks piled up in the woods, and advanced to support a battery planted across the plank road, running from Fredericksburg to Orange Court-House.

Our colonel sat upon his horse, grim and silent except for an occasional brief order. The first line rested upon the breastworks, and the soldiers were boiling their coffee in their tin cups for their breakfast, under fire, unconcerned as only veterans can be in such circumstances.

At half-past seven, with a terrible yell, the rebels charged, and drove back our skirmishers. When our regiment was deployed as skirmishers, the enemy held out hats and blankets from behind trees, to draw our fire.

An ominous lull succeeded, which led Colonel Gruff to growl, —

"I vonders vat mischief dey is up to now?"

We did not remain long in doubt, for we soon distinctly heard the rebel order, —

"Forward! double-quick! guide, left!" followed by a yell and the tramp of advancing men, accompanied by a storm of shot.

While we were battling with this force, an ominous cry went down our lines, "We are out of ammunition!"

"Sergeant Nickerson, with some men, vill gather cartridges from the dead and vounded," came the order from Colonel Gruff.

But it was all in vain; we were repulsed, and fell back behind the breastworks in our rear. Here again the cry went down the line, "Out of ammunition!"

To add to our dismay, the fallen trees which formed an abatis in our front were set on fire by the enemy's shot. The suffocating smoke began to choke and blind us. In this emergency, while the enemy's bullets drummed a discordant tattoo against our breastworks, Jed sprung over the log parapet, and prevented the serious disaster which threatened us by extinguishing the flames.

Many who had not expected to see him return alive, silently grasped his hand as he came back unharmed.

Colonel Gruff simply said, "Vell done, sergeant!"

Thus the fight went on through the day.

It was near sundown when on our right there broke out a furious sound of battle. Nearer and nearer and more clamorous came the uproar. It was the attack of Jackson which had crushed and driven back our right flank in confusion. That night, as well as the next morning, the fight was continuous. The ceaseless patter of bullets did its deadly work. We had changed our position

several times, losing many men, and now the forests around us were on fire.

"Where is Lieutenant Weston?" came the cry.

"He's left behind, wounded, on our right," said some one in the ranks.

Jed went to Colonel Gruff; I saw him nod in assent to some proposition made by Jed, then beckoned to me. Together we went back to rescue the wounded from the flames. The fire was crackling among the underbrush and resinous pines, as through the blinding smoke we groped our way. Heavy masses of black smoke were illuminated here and there by the flames. We were partly in this forest fire, when Jed clutched my arm, saying hurriedly, "Look!"

A great tongue of flame pierced the smoke, and with a roar like an advancing wave came sweeping down upon us. We turned and ran; when Jed called out, "Right here to the left!" and sprang into the smoke where the flames seemed to be stayed. "Here are some of our men."

A small, almost stagnant, brook, which at one time during the fight had divided our company into platoons, held back the flames, which, when encountering this brook, hissed like an angry serpent, and darted fiery fangs to the dry stubble on the other side, where some of our wounded lay, who were trying to drag themselves from the reach of the fire. We reached these wounded men and began moving them to a little clearing near at hand,

Taking the rebel cavalryman's blanket to make a stretcher. — Page 233.

where they would be comparatively safe. We were thus engaged when some one exclaimed, —

"Hello, old hoss, what yer doin' thar?"

It was a rebel cavalryman engaged in apparently the same mission as ourselves.

"Lend us your blanket, and help us," said Jed confidently.

The Confederate soldier hesitated a moment, and then, as if unable to resist this appeal to his better nature, unslung the blanket which hung on his shoulders, and we fastened it to our muskets for a stretcher. While the rebel and myself carried the wounded to the clearing, Jed beat back the fire and continued his search for Weston.

We soon heard a shout from Jed, "I've found him!"

We reached the spot, and found Weston, and near him a wounded Confederate; we took the rebel soldier in our blanket, while Jed lifted Lieutenant Weston in his arms and followed us. We hurried, for the flames had now crossed the little brook. We were scorched and burned, but when on reaching the clearing and looking back for Jed he could not be seen. A whirlwind of fire was sweeping over the field which we had just crossed. We turned back, but everywhere encountered the roaring, crackling flames; while clouds of smoke, driven by the rising wind, blinded us. We had already advanced too far. We had turned when we heard a feeble cry for help. It was Jed's voice.

"Here!" said the Confederate, dropping the muskets, and trampling and beating down the fire with his blanket, "Here he is!"

I imitated his example until we reached Jed in a little cleared spot, not twenty feet broad, nearly surrounded by the fire which roared and crackled around him. In the centre of the clearing he had placed the wounded lieutenant, and was trying to beat back the fire. The flames meanwhile had closed around us, and for a few minutes it seemed impossible for any of us to escape. We threw ourselves on the ground with our faces downward, and waited until at last the flames subsided and opened up a path of safety to the larger clearing beyond.

"That was a doggoned close call, stranger," said the Confederate, as he got to his feet.

As we emerged with our burden into the cleared field, we could hear the shrieks and cries of those whom the fire had reached. We were all in a pitiful plight. Jed fell fainting on the ground, and I thought him dead. The Confederate unslung his canteen, and saying, "This is what he needs," poured water down Jed's throat. My eyebrows and hair were singed, and my face and hands blistered.

After a while Jed revived, and feebly inquired, "Is he safe?" I nodded an assent. The lieutenant was less burned than any of us.

The Confederate called our attention to infantry

firing, now ringing in the woods at our left, and exclaimed, —

"For God's sake get out of this, or you will be taken prisoners!"

To give his admonition greater emphasis, he directed us by what he thought was the way to our lines, and then grasping us in a final hand-shake, as the bursting shell began to fall, said, "Good-by, Yanks! Good luck!"

As we crossed a part of the plateau at Chancellorsville, we saw the house on fire, and found the rear of our army just retiring. Here comrades helped us remove Weston to an ambulance.

As we left him, Weston said to Jed, "Hoskins, you are a brave man; I owe you my life. Come to me to-morrow, and I will tell you something that you ought to know; I am afraid I shall never get over this wound in my side."

Understanding that our regiment had moved into a new position, towards the river, we now tried to unite our fortunes with them once more.

On our way we encountered some artillery men dragging off a battery by hand, as all the horses had been killed, and one of the wheels of a gun had also been shattered. This group began to joke us on our blistered, singed appearance, when our attention was arrested by a hoarse cry behind us. We turned and saw a tall man, dressed in nothing but a shirt, running towards us like mad.

"Gosh all Whittaker! but they stole my clothes

and most got me!" he yelled. The voice had a familiar ring, but the singed eyebrows and blistered face and nose of the fugitive made him look more like a painted clown in a circus than a soldier. It was "Sonny." Soldiers who are always ready to laugh at anything odd or grotesque, began to jeer and laugh at him until they noticed that his shirt was saturated with blood.

"Why," explained Sonny, "I got to bush-whacking around out there, when the first thing I knew I was senseless. Some of them rebs shot me, stole my hoss, and then, when I had fainted or somethin', actually stripped my clothes off my back! The woods were all afire, when I come tu, and I had to step light, I tell you!"

When Sonny recognized us he said, "I was never made for a cavalryman, anyhow — plague take a hoss! My time will be out soon, and then I'll never look at a hoss agin. I've got a thunderin' great hole in my ham, and too much smoke for my bacon, tu, I guess."

With varying fortune, humiliated by needless defeat, in the course of a few days our army fell back to its old position at Falmouth.

We visited Weston at the field hospital soon after our arrival, as requested.

We found him lying on a hospital cot, very pale and feeble, for the surgeons had just extracted a bullet from his leg. They had, however, decided that a hip amputation was not advisable.

On our entering, after a moment's pause, he said to me, "It was I who took your aunt's money, which she thought she placed in the hands of my father."

"But," said I, in surprise, "my aunt distinctly remembered giving it to your father."

"It was not my father," said the lieutenant. "I confess it with shame. I did not plan to take the money at first. I was at home on recruiting duty, and we were to have a theatrical entertainment, in which I was to take the part of an old man. I had just 'made up,' as the theatre people call it, with my father as a model. I put on an old wig my father had discarded, and a suit of his clothes. I was practising the part when your aunt came in. The temptation to try my make-up on her was irresistible. I was astonished when she handed me the money, and asked me to invest it for her, and said she would bring me the rest the next evening. To prevent my father's knowing that I had taken the first, I had to be present in my disguise to take the second instalment of cash. At first I thought I would send it to your aunt by express or mail. Before the theatricals came off I was on my way to the army, having first hid the money, which I had put in a tin box, in my straw mattress at home."

As this explained a mystery involving a loss to my aunt, and calling in question also the honesty of Squire Weston, we were rejoiced to have the matter cleared up.

Before leaving him, Weston said, "Hoskins, I owe my life to you, and I can never forget it. I believe you are a good man; can't you pray for me?"

"I can't pray much," said Jed, "but the Lord's Prayer is always sweet and precious. Let us repeat it together; perhaps God will hear it and bless us." And when in unison they repeated "deliver us from evil," there were tears in the lieutenant's eyes.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARCHING ON TO BATTLE.

AFTER the campaign of Chancellorsville, Lee determined to assume the offensive. The confidence and pride of the South had been stimulated by his successes, until the pressure of public sentiment compelled him to an invasion of the loyal States.

As early as May, our conversations with rebel pickets showed us that some aggressive movement was contemplated.

One day, while exchanging coffee for tobacco by means of a board fitted up with a sail and rudder, as a ferry of communication with the rebel pickets on the other side of the Rappahannock River, one of them sarcastically inquired, —

"When are you 'ns coming over to see we uns?"

"It's your turn next to come and see us. We are tired of doing all the visiting," replied Osgood, who was tending the ferry.

"Reckon you 'ns won't have to wait long, Yanks. Uncle Robert is gittin' right ready to come over and git some fixin's, and to lick yer out o' yer boots."

The rebel newspapers, received through the same source, showed the drift of Southern sentiment in that direction.

Such, in fact, was the confident desire of the South at this time, that on a requisition for rations from Lee's army, there was said to have been indorsed this laconic suggestion: "If General Lee wants rations for his army, let him seek them in Pennsylvania."

It was not long after this that it became evident to General Hooker that the rebel army was in motion. Their cavalry, behind which the movements of their infantry were masked, on the 9th of May was attacked by Pleasonton, revealing the fact that A. P. Hill's and Longstreet's corps of the rebel army were in the vicinity of Culpeper.

Ewell soon appeared in the Shenandoah Valley, and from there crossed into Maryland and Pennsylvania.

In an army the under generals usually know but little of the intentions of the commander, except as it is matured in orders received. The order "Pack up," came on the 11th of June. Our brigade was soon in motion on the south side of the Rappahannock.

We began a series of long marches and countermarches, sometimes making thirty miles a day over rough and dusty or muddy roads.

Marching thirty miles a day may seem a small thing to mention; but if any of my young readers,

emulous of military glory, will equip themselves with a haversack containing three days' rations, a knapsack weighing from eighteen to twenty-five pounds, a canteen, and forty rounds of cartridges, besides a Springfield rifle and bayonet, and will march even one mile over the best of roads, they will get a better idea of it.

If an officer does not understand marching men, as happened to be the case in our brigade, he will make them cover long distances without rest, and such marching quickly breaks down the best of men.

An ignorant general, at this time, frequently marched our column over difficult roads from ten to twelve miles, without halting them. It resulted in frequent sunstroke, and death from exhaustion. Thereafter we were halted a few minutes every hour, as the attention of an officer high in rank had been called to this manner of marching.

We crossed the Potomac on a pontoon bridge, built on sixty-four boats or pontoons, marched to Monocacy, and at night bivouacked thirty miles from our point of departure.

The transition from worn-out, battle-scarred Virginia to the fertile fields of Maryland and Pennsylvania, was, in effect, like passing from stormy to sunlit skies.

It was at this time that we learned that General Hooker had been deposed from command, and General Meade put in his place.

The novelty of being saluted by the smiles of

women and children, instead of frowns, and of marching through beautiful streets; seeing the stars and stripes floating from the houses, and even churches; of being among friends instead of enemies, — was an agreeable contrast, which cannot be expressed in words.

The usual sentiment of soldiers marching for battle is, "Let us fight now, since we *must* fight, and have it done with." In addition to this feeling, there was here a new one. It was, "If we do not whip our enemies now, they will overrun these fertile fields and devastate these comfortable homes with their hungry hordes."

Our division reached Emmettsburg July 1, and at ten o'clock in the morning heard the first faint and almost inaudible rumble of cannonading at Gettysburg, where the 1st and 11th Corps had already encountered the enemy near Willoughby Run.

It had not been the intention of Meade to fight a battle at Gettysburg. The concentration of Buford's cavalry there was a mask to conceal his proposed concentration of troops behind Pipe Creek, where he expected to fight a decisive battle. But "man proposes, and God disposes."

The movement which Hooker had projected, was a threat on the rebel commander's communications. This threat caused Lee to recall his advance columns from Harrisburg. Gettysburg, like the hub of a wheel, with roads radiating from it like spokes,

was the first point Lee could reach, and lay hold of direct lines for retreat or communications South.

Neither of the commanders of the great armies soon to meet in battle knew of the presence of the other. It was a gigantic game of blind-man's buff.

So, while Lee was reaching forward to grasp a safe line of retreat or advance, and Meade was masking the contemplated concentration, blind fate brought them together on the field of Gettysburg.

On the last day of June, General Buford, by questioning prisoners, got information that led him to believe that the enemy was concentrating at Gettysburg. The temper of this great cavalry officer was too aggressive to leave to an enemy a field that he was able to hold by fighting. He ambushed his men on Willoughby Creek, which runs north and south about a mile west of Gettysburg.

About nine o'clock on the morning of the 1st of July the Confederate column, preceded by a line of skirmishers, descended the western slope of the stream, and a desperate encounter at once took place.

Buford, outnumbered by the enemy, anxiously awaited the approach of the 1st Corps. The signal officer, from the belfry of the Lutheran seminary near by, soon signalled its approach.

Buford hastened to the belfry to confirm the glad tidings with his own eyes. Coming from the belfry, he met General Reynolds, who commanded the 1st Corps, and assured him that his men could hold

on until the infantry arrived. On its arrival, Reynolds rode forward to direct the attack.

The struggle was then for the possession of a small piece of woods, which projects like a salient down the slope east of Willoughby Run. If the Federals could only hold this position, it divided the line of the rebel advance. If possessed, on the other hand, by the rebels, it divided the Union line, and would compel its retreat.

General Reynolds was directing his men, when Cutler's men and the Iron Brigade arrived, and went into action on the right and left of the Chambersburg road. While the men were advancing to the attack, Reynolds urged them to hold their ground at all hazards, to which they proudly replied, "If we can't hold it, where will you find the men who can?"

As the Iron Brigade marched on to the field they shouted, "We've come, and come to stay!" And most of them did stay, leaving their dead bodies on the field which they so bravely defended.

The Confederate General Archer was rushing his men into the triangular piece of woods, hitherto mentioned, when they encountered Cutler's brigade, and recognized them by their hats.

"It ain't no militia, it's the Army of the Potomac," was the surprised exclamation of the Confederates.

While leading the attack to a point in the woods, General Reynolds was shot, and fell dead in this his

first encounter with the enemy on the soil of his native State. By his associates he was regarded as the most remarkable man in the army, and one destined to the greatest measure of fame.

The command of the 1st Corps now devolved on General Doubleday, who, it will be remembered, fired the first shot from Sumter, a narrative of which I have given elsewhere.

It was a task for a giant. His forces, outflanked, stubbornly fell back. Howard arrived, and from the belfry of the seminary viewed the field. He saw the four weak brigades of the 1st Corps struggling with six large Confederate brigades. The 11th Corps arrived at eleven o'clock, and Howard took command of the field. He stretched his men out around the town, leaving a gap between the 11th and 1st Corps.

Oak Hill commanded the right of the field. At three o'clock the Confederates broke through the right of the 1st Corps and the left of the 11th, planted artillery on Oak Hill, and disrupted the entire Union line.

The unfortunate 11th Corps fell back through the town in disordered flight, impeding the retreat of the 1st Corps, which met its disorganized crowds while falling back in good order.

The brave efforts of this corps has but few parallels in the history of fighting. Nearly half of its numbers were left dead or dying on the battle-field.

Eighteen thousand men had withstood the attack

of twenty-five thousand, in the heroic attempt to keep back the invaders.

At four o'clock that afternoon the defeated fragments of the 1st and 11th Corps were climbing Cemetery Hill, where Steinwehr's two brigades, as a reserve, were in a fortified position.

General Hancock, at this critical moment, arrived, and with his clear head and magnetic presence put a new soul, as it were, into the fragments of the army on Cemetery Hill.

Such was the scene being enacted at Gettysburg while the blue columns of our army corps were swinging over the dusty roads from Emmettsburg to the field of battle.

At first we heard only the rumble of artillery, like distant thunder; but as we hurried on, the sound of cannonading grew more and more distinct, and the men needed no urging to hasten their march.

As we reached the boundaries of Pennsylvania the regiments of our corps belonging to that State gave enthusiastic cheers.

Colonel Gruff was seen to shake his head, and was heard to say, "Ter teffel vill be to pay soon."

Late in the afternoon we met an occasional group of stragglers. Some also passed us who had secured teams, and were hurrying forward as if fearing to be late for the fight; others showed evident dislike to marching towards the sound of the guns. We also met several squads of prisoners being marched to the rear; and the usual salutations,

"How are you, Yanks?" — "How are you, Johnnies?" were exchanged.

A citizen whom we met said, "If you go any farther you will have a fight in the night;" while a negro declared that "de roads ahead is full of rebs."

Colonel Gruff sent these persons to the general, but no orders to retrace our steps were given until we picked up several of the rebel pickets, who were out looking for water; then a countermarch was ordered.

The sound of battle had, meanwhile, died away with the declining sun. We forded Willoughby Run, south of the town, at nearly eleven o'clock that moonlit night, and at half-past two o'clock in the morning of the 2d of July stacked our arms, and threw ourselves upon the ground to sleep the sleep of tired men. We did not even heed the picket shots on our front; and a volley from the enemy in the early morning hours, who were advancing by the same road over which we had so recently marched, failed to awaken me. I was rudely shaken by the shoulder before I realized that I was on a battle-field, so sound is the sleep of tired youth.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE BATTLE-FIELD OF GETTYSBURG.

DURING the early morning hours the sky was cloudy, and a veil-like vapor overhung the valley of Gettysburg. Before noon, however, the sun dispelled the mists, and lit up the smiling summer fields.

Our line of battle was advanced to the Emmettsburg road, which ran obliquely across the plain, and passed near the foot of Cemetery Ridge, into the village on our right.

The line of hills on which a portion of the Union lines now rested, and which formed its defence on the 3d of July, resembled in form the letter f. The dot at the top of the f stands for Culp's Hill; the semicircular portion, the cemetery; from thence down to the cross, Cemetery Ridge; the bottom of the f, Roundtop; the cross of the f represents Ziegler's grove. Opposite, and a mile away, was Seminary Ridge, whereon the Confederate army was posted, its entire line resembling in form a letter C, with its two wings almost encircling ours, and over five miles in extent.

"What a magnificent sight," said Jed, pointing to the long compact blue line of men advancing

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over the plain to the Emmettsburg road. With an oscillating motion peculiar to keeping step, our corps moved forward, its burnished Springfield rifles flashing in the sun like the foam fringe of a blue wave. On our right, the cemetery presented the curious contrasts of polished brass field-pieces, and infantry supports in line of battle, among the white marble monuments.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and our corps had moved forward to the Emmettsburg road. We were moving into position, when Jed said to me, —

"Colonel Gruff looks anxious and troubled to-day."

"I heard him say last night," said Haskell, our orderly sergeant, "that he had a feeling that he should not come out of the battle alive; the old fellow is nervous, I guess."

Jed responded sharply, "Colonel Gruff is no coward, and if he knew that he was to be shot in another hour, it would not change his manner."

"He makes no display of his good qualities," said another, "but there is no one in the army who acts more from conviction of duty. All soldiers become fatalists, and Colonel Gruff is no exception to the rule; he may have a premonition of evil, but he knows that he cannot change fate."

At this instant the column had reached the Emmettsburg road, and the order was given, "Column halt! In place, rest!" The men threw them-

selves on the ground in careless attitudes, but ready for instant action.

The scene around us was very peaceful; a treacherous contrast to the storm of battle about to burst over these sunlit fields.

In front of our company, on the opposite side of the road, were a farmhouse and its buildings. A herd of cows was grazing near, tame pigeons cooed, and bees hummed in the hives close at hand.

Jed and I left the ranks to fill our canteens at the well. A cat was asleep on the veranda, and the mistress was bustling around the house with a face as serene as the morning itself. She explained to us that it was baking day. When we asked her if she would sell us some bread, she gave us each a loaf, with honey and butter enough to make it very palatable.

Colonel Gruff, whom we had seen smoking in the shade on the veranda, came into the kitchen, attracted no doubt, like ordinary soldiers, by hearing talk of bread and honey.

After buying some, he said kindly to the mistress, —

"My goot voman, dere's going to be fighting here, and you had petter get avay at vonce, or you'll get hurt."

A voice was heard from some subterranean place near at hand, saying, "I wish the soldiers would keep away from my house!"

"Who's that?" inquired the colonel sharply.

"That's my man; he's frightened and has gone down cellar," said the woman, coolly removing, with a long iron-shod hook, some brown loaves from her capacious oven.

Just before we left the house, a report of artillery was heard, and a shot came crashing through one of the outbuildings.

"You'd petter go down cellar mit your husband," said Colonel Gruff to the mistress.

The woman stood courageously by her oven and refused to "budge," as Jed called it, and continued to sell her bread, running her cooking apparatus at full pressure, saying, "I'll never leave this house!" Another shot crashed into the house, causing a howl from the cellar, while we hurriedly took our places in the ranks to repel a possible charge.

And now a shell comes in curved lines, like a rocket, spluttering and growling, like an ill-natured, absent-minded man, and then, as if in sudden recognition of our presence, explodes above our heads.

The ominous order comes, to "Take arms!" as another rebel battery opens fire on our left. Shot crashes through the buildings from two different directions.

"Dey's got us enfiladed, poys!" coolly remarks Colonel Gruff, who sits his horse at the right rear of the line, smoking his pipe. In another moment the veteran's manner changes; with a quick movement he puts away his pipe, takes his field-glass

from its case, hanging by his side, and peers intently towards the enemy. He puts away his glass, glances down the line, and gives a few orders. "We shall catch it now," growls one of the men in an undertone, observing these movements of the veteran.

Colonel Gruff now rides along the front of our line, addressing in an undertone a few words to each captain. Then comes the order, "Attention company! Load at will! Load!" The polished rammers ring in the muskets, the locks of the muskets crackle as the caps are adjusted. Artillery goes into position like whirling clock-work. A crash of fast plunging shells comes from the enemy. The woman runs from the house with her apron over her head, as if for protection, exclaiming, "They've shot my oven."

A terrible uproar of battle breaks out on our left, beyond the elevation of the peach orchard. Shot smite our ranks from our right and front, and shriek over our heads. Long, dark masses of men are forming in the fields in our front. We hear the rattle of musketry and the roar of artillery on the line beyond our left, which curves from the peach orchard, where it forms an angle and sweeps back towards Roundtop.

Occasionally above the roar we hear the yell and shout of the charge and repulse, and from the bluish-white sulphur clouds which hang near the ground, we see the flash of artillery.

The storm of battle has reached us. Our skirmishers have fallen back to the main line, and the whole front now lights up with the explosion of muskets. There is a quick, incessant *snap*, *snap*, *snap*, of muskets fired at will, punctuated by less rapid detonations of artillery. A kitten, mewing piteously, runs from the house and climbs for protection upon one of our men's shoulders. Men, wounded, drop their muskets and limp to the rear; they fall fast. The flagstaff is shot from the hands of its bearer, and for an instant the flag touches the ground. It is raised again. Bullets from the enemy hiss and whisper death. Wounded and dying men gasp out hurried or inarticulate words. The voice of Colonel Gruff is heard in clear, commanding tones, "Steady, men."

The horses and most of the men on the guns on our left are shot. Our regimental front has closed up its death-riddled ranks, until it occupies not half its original space, and yet the line stands firm. Will re-enforcements ever come?

Time passes with leaden, sluggish wings, for time is not measured by minutes, but by sensations. The enemy have broken the Union line at the peach orchard, and our position is being flanked.

We fall back reluctantly, for we do not understand that this is necessary in order to connect with our lines, which have been swept towards Round top by Longstreet's terrible attack.

Re-enforcements come up and begin to form on

our right, to bring us within supporting distance of the 2d Corps. Our ranks, meanwhile, exposed to volleys from three directions, grow thinner. A bullet strikes my musket, glances off, and wounds a man by my side.

The Confederate attack has expended its force. Batteries from the hills back of us throw plunging shot into the ranks.

We had fallen back almost to the ridge, when there came one of those outbursts often seen among veteran soldiers. A cry went down the line as if by some electric, spontaneous agreement, "Charge them! charge them!" and the five regiments of our gallant brigade, so decimated that its lines scarcely occupied a hundred feet of front, with a wild hurrah went charging fiercely over the ground they had so reluctantly abandoned.

We recaptured our abandoned batteries, and rescued and sent to the rear many wounded comrades; while in our rear, men, both enemies and friends, who were thought to be dead, rose to their feet all over the plain.

Near the house on the Emmettsburg road we captured a group of Confederates, who were attempting to get away with one of our abandoned batteries. The enemy had abandoned the main attack.

Longstreet's flank attack had failed. The fire from their artillery still struck our ranks. In obedience to orders, in the gathering darkness we fell back to the heights of Cemetery Ridge, where the

arms stacked for the five regiments would scarcely be sufficient for one full regiment.

We now began to have intelligence of the fight from other parts of the line, — of the baffled attack and heroic defence of Roundtop, and that General Sickles had lost his leg.

Exhausted, Jed and I had lain down in our blankets, when we heard some one inquiring for Colonel Gruff. No one seemed to know anything about him. He was missing.

"I saw him leading his horse," said some one; "the horse was wounded, and then I saw him on foot giving orders, with his saddle on his shoulders."

We aroused ourselves at once. Inquiry was made at different parts of the line, but without result. "We must go out and look for the colonel," said Jed decisively.

Notwithstanding the terrible strain put upon them by the day's battle, many men joined us in the search for, and the relief of, their unfortunate comrades who were missing. The weary privates who had fought through the day volunteered to carry water to the wounded, and with stretchers began to explore the moonlit plains where the battle had raged.

Such a sight of death and suffering is seldom seen by human eyes. The pale moonlight gave to the dead a more ghastly look, and to the wounded a more sickening pallor.

We were giving water to the wounded, who made constant outcry for it, and were putting wounded men in more comfortable positions, when we saw a man rise from a group. Challenged, it proved to be a Confederate soldier, engaged in the same mission of mercy as ourselves.

"I have been giving water to both Yanks and rebs, but I am a prisoner if you say so," he said.

We shook hands with him, in recognition of his fraternal spirit, and bade him go on his way. At one point in our search there was an isolated bowlder twenty feet broad, rounded towards the enemy and flattened on the opposite side. There were twenty dead men lying together here, and among them we saw the shoulder-straps of an officer and the chevrons of sergeants. In the attack which had swept the field they had been cut off from the main line, and, refusing to surrender, had fought and died at their post.

We came to Colonel Gruff's dead horse, searched the plains near the Emmettsburg road, and ventured into the farmhouse where our line had at first been formed. The house was abandoned, with the exception of a few wounded men on the veranda. The moonlight streamed through the irregular holes in the buildings made by the shot, shell, and shower of bullets.

We advanced beyond, when, "Halt! Who goes there?" came the quick challenge of a picket.

We threw ourselves on the ground, and on our

hands and knees crept towards the house again, amid the hiss of bullets.

"A close call," whispered Jed.

"Yes," I responded, "but I am afraid Colonel Gruff has had a still closer one."

We rejoined a group of our own men, and searched the field towards the peach orchard.

"Don't go out there," said a wounded officer; "my men are out there."

"We can take care of ourselves," said Jed.

We had not gone a hundred yards when *ping, ping, zip, zip!* came the bullets of the enemy's videttes. We went quickly back.

When returning, we halted near the rebel officer who had given us the friendly warning, and asked him if we could do anything for him. He replied that he was in a very uncomfortable position, and that if we could move him he would be grateful. We gathered a few blankets from the dead, and with these arranged him as comfortably as we could, and gave him a canteen of water. "After the war is over we may meet as friends, and not enemies," said the officer.

Our search had been in vain: the colonel was either dead or in the hands of the enemy. We reached our lines, and sadly threw ourselves down by our sleeping comrades.

At sunrise the Confederates were found to be in possession of Culp's Hill, in the rear of the cemetery. Had they advanced from that point in force

during the night they could have seized the Baltimore road, and compelled our retreat.

We quickly drove them from Culp's Hill with our superior artillery. The Union lines were now very compact, having assumed the position on the line of hills, which in the beginning of this chapter we mentioned as resembling the letter f. Our line was a convex one, easy to re-enforce, while the rebel lines were concave, and required a march of five miles in communicating one wing with the other.

Silence fell upon the field. The sun was hot, and our ranks reclined upon the ground, expecting an attack. Two hours passed, and not a gun was heard. At last on Seminary Hill a single gun was fired, then another. It was the signal for attack. A most terrible cannonade began. Shell groaned, hissed, and spluttered. Solid shot crushed the fences and stone walls, ploughed the ground, or exploded our caissons. A continuous succession of crashing sounds ensued, as if heaven and earth were rent asunder. The air was filled with bursting shell, causing us to grow pale, and look into each other's faces with awe and terror.

By a rapid and continuous circle of cross-firing of artillery, Lee, with one hundred and fifty pieces of artillery, was endeavoring to dismount our guns and demoralize our troops. Had he succeeded he could have broken through our left centre.

For two hours the terrible cannonade of death, replied to by the Union batteries, continued. Hill

and valley seemed a flame of fire, while a canopy of smoke that came from the cannons' mouths and obscured the sun, produced a blackened magnificence that no pen can describe.

The Union guns were sent to the rear, and our firing ceased, but that from the rebel guns continued a while longer. But all things have an end, and at last the carnival of death ceased.

Then we saw that the charge was coming. The faces of the men around me were set in the rigid tension of suspense. The Confederate columns moved over the plain from different directions in converging columns towards Cemetery Ridge as a common centre of attack. This attack has been erroneously termed Pickett's charge. It was more properly Longstreet's assault, as Lee had placed it under the direction and management of the latter general.

The smoke lifts lazily and drifts away from the valley, revealing the dense gray masses of Confederates advancing over the fields. They approach with the steady tread of veterans, and with the confidence of victors.

The Union artillery, hitherto silent from Roundtop to the cemetery, open mouths of destruction upon their compact lines. As they come nearer, grape and canister pass through and rake their ranks like chariots of death. Great gaps are seen in their ranks. They close up and come on. We see them, like shadows through the smoke, align

their men and rush upon our lines with shrill, sharp yells and cries. At the foot of the slope our men, who are behind a stone wall, give way. "My God! they've forced our lines, sergeant," says Lieutenant O'Keif, clutching my arm. For a few moments we hear a succession of terrible sounds, in which there is the rattle of musketry, and shriek of human voices.

The charge is repulsed. The proud array that marched so bravely and gallantly on our lines are dead, wounded, or scattered in flight.

All was excitement and exultation, but oh, what a frightful scene! The whole slope was covered with the dead, and with writhing, wounded men. The Emmettsburg road, in front of the ridge, was literally choked with the dead and wounded victims of the struggle. The cries of the wounded for water mingled with the shrieks of agony, while thousands of the enemy lay upon the ground extending their arms in token of surrender. A victorious field is second only in horror to a field of defeat.

The battle of Gettysburg was over, and the rebel army gathered up its broken columns.

The next morning they were found occupying a short but compact line in the fringe of woods on Seminary Heights.

We were assisting to gather and help the wounded, all that day. At one point in the field we came to a group of men wounded on the 2d, only one of whom was living. Jed rushed towards

him with quick sympathy. The wounded man called for water; and then said, as if the scene had made so great an impression on his mind that he could speak of nothing else, pointing to the dead around him, —

"That boy died crying for his mother. This man crept up to me, and put his hand in mine, as if for sympathy, and died. This man lasted until most daylight."

"Did you see any one with a horse?" said Jed, wiping away the tears caused by the brief but pathetic recital.

"An old fellow with a saddle stopped here last night, and gave us water!"

"That's Colonel Gruff," said Jed, "it's just like him. His heart is as tender as a child's."

A new hope sprang up in our hearts. Colonel Gruff might be alive and a prisoner.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER BATTLE.

HEAVY rainfalls follow a great battle, as if Mother Nature, more pitying than men, desired to relieve the soreness of hurts and wounds, and the thirst of those lying on ensanguined fields. The grateful sense of relief thus afforded was often expressed by those whom we assisted.

I was speaking of this to Jed as our division marched over the muddy roads, in the rain, to strike the flank of Lee's retreating army.

"Yes," said Jed, as he stopped to adjust the strap of his heavy knapsack, made still heavier by the soaking rain, and then, with his quaint grimace, continued, "but I ain't hankering for any more of it." Then, after a moment's thoughtful silence, he said, "You remember the book we were reading at Fredericksburg, Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey,' and that passage which I said was as tender and as beautiful as the Bible, 'The Lord tempers the winds to the shorn lamb.' I have thought often since, that if we are in the right frame of mind, — that of cheerfulness and thankfulness for the good we really have, — misery and discomfort roll from us like rain from a rubber blanket. I sometimes

think a soldier's cheerfulness while marching to battle for a good cause is a prayer, which our good Father is more likely to hear than mere words which have no fulfilment in self-sacrifice."

I repeat this conversation because it expresses Jed's deeply blended patriotic and religious convictions, which, however, seldom took the form of words. It was as if a grain of seed sown by Him of Nazareth had found lodgement in his soul, and was bearing the fruits of a beautiful life.

Jed would usually turn away my attempts at theological controversy by saying, "Wrangling and controversy lead us away from Christ; not to him. We can easily understand all that is essential to make us like him; love for him means love for our fellow-men, and how can there be love without charity and forbearance?"

This is all of Jed's theories of religion, or of his love for the Master, that I ever knew; but I did know that daily and secret prayer was giving to his character a manly sweetness which impressed all who knew him.

One character connected with this narrative I have not yet mentioned, Colonel Gruff's servant, a gentleman of extreme brevity and blackness (with the whitest teeth and the most expansive india-rubber-like mouth I ever saw), known to the regiment as Smutty. He had come into our lines while the regiment was at Fredericksburg. Colonel Gruff had employed him to cook and work

around his quarters, until, being absent for a few hours, he returned to find Smutty arrayed in a suit of his clothes. The colonel thereupon indignantly discharged him. But the next morning Smutty was found at work as usual in the colonel's tent, getting breakfast and brushing his clothes, as if nothing had happened. The colonel then not only discharged him, but "fired him out," with emphatic emphasis.

In less than three hours Colonel Gruff was awakened from his noonday nap by what Osgood called "a rumpus." It was Smutty, engaged in a stentorian conversation with a soldier who had stumbled over the tent ropes.

"When yer toddles ober dem ropes, I speaks to yer, and calls yer white trash; when yer tumbles ober hyer twice like yer dus now, dere's gwine to be somebody hurt. Does yer har me?"

The colonel ran from his tent to remonstrate and to again discharge him, to which Smutty paid not the slightest attention, but, like a miniature cyclone, continued chastising the soldier. After the affair was ended by the ejection of the cause of the disturbance, Smutty, with his broadest grin, bowed to the colonel, and said, —

"Go into de tent, if yer please, Massa Kunnel, I kin tend to de sturbances."

Whether Colonel Gruff was converted by his usefulness, or conquered by his persistency, I do not know, but from that time he gave up the task

of discharging Smutty, declaring he would have to wait until Smutty discharged himself.

Smutty was a model servant in many ways, and was devotedly attached to the interests of his master; but he still retained the inconvenient habit of wearing the colonel's clothes, and never, to my knowledge, paid the slightest heed to his remonstrances, or any one's else, in the matter.

Smutty was not particularly fond of battle, and absented himself from such "sturbances" as he called them.

When Colonel Gruff failed to appear after the third day's fighting, Smutty's face had an injured expression, as if he or the "Kunnel," or both, had been improperly dealt with. He was silent and uncommunicative; and then, as if our society had lost its charms for him, he disappeared.

Jed declared he had gone in pursuit of Colonel Gruff, while others persisted that he had gone over to the enemy to look up another master.

Our advance continued until, on the 12th, we once more confronted the enemy at Williamsport. Here the Confederates were separated from Virginia by a freshet, which made the Potomac impassable, and there was no bridge over which they could cross the river.

Much was said in the newspapers during the war, about soldiers being anxious to be led into battle; but soldiers were not usually eager to fight.

At this time, however, they had but one desire, and that was to take arms and charge. They believed they could capture all the material of the rebel army, and end the war.

And here let me say, that, while there will always be a difference of opinion as to the manner the Confederate army should have been attacked, there can be but little doubt that Meade should have struck a blow at his antagonist before he crossed the Potomac.

On the 17th our brigade crossed the river, and marched along the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which separated the two armies. There were occasional skirmishes as the contestants came in contact with each other, through the mountain passes.

The rugged picturesqueness of these mountains, with their overhanging cliffs, on which grew forest trees and a dense undergrowth, impressed us with their wild beauty.

At Manassas Gap our corps relieved the cavalry. The rearguard of the Confederate army held possession of a part of it, while their army made its passage from the valley to Culpeper Court-House.

An unusual incident took place while a part of our brigade was on picket here. A number of Confederate soldiers came in, and delivered themselves up as prisoners, saying they were tired of fighting. They expressed a desire to get some Yankee coffee, and go to the rear.

We then learned that the Confederate army had retreated, and that these men had purposely staid behind to be taken prisoners. As the last of these men came in, a scow-shaped wagon with a ragged white cover followed in their rear, as if under their charge. The driver was a short, stout, black man, who explained his mission by announcing that he had something for the —th Mass. Jed and I, who were just relieved from duty, were among the crowd who gathered around the incoming "Johnnies." "What's up?" we inquired. Just then, as we pressed forward, the negro driver caught sight of us, and exclaimed, —

"Got suthin fur yo, sure nuff, sah!"

The reader can imagine our astonishment when in the sable driver we recognized Smutty. Added to this surprise was another still greater. The rough canvas of the wagon was pushed aside, and the face of Colonel Gruff looked out.

There was great excitement in our regiment, with whom the colonel was a great favorite. The grizzly face of the colonel, unshaven for a long time, was pale and haggard; but his joy, as well as our own, at this meeting cannot be described.

There was one thing, however, that marred our pleasure, — the dear, brave old colonel's arm had been amputated below the elbow.

His story was soon told in brief. He had been wounded at the time of our falling back from the Emmettsburg road, while attempting to help some

wounded men; and, while endeavoring to find his way back, he had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

Before Lee's retreat, many prisoners had been paroled by the Confederates; but for some reason Colonel Gruff had not been included among them, and had been hurried forward with the retreating enemy.

How Smutty had reached the rebel lines was never known, as that dignitary never condescended to explain trifling matters; but one day he had mysteriously thrust his head into the wagon which contained Colonel Gruff, and then for a time disappeared.

"At first," said the colonel, "I thought it an hallucination, but soon after found Smutty driving the team in the same unconcerned, matter-of-course manner in which he achieves all his triumphs, and one would have thought that he had always driven that particular team."

When he was asked what had become of the other driver, he replied, "Golly! dun no; 'spect he drapped from dat yer mule;" and that was the only explanation he ever vouchsafed, to the colonel or any one else. As Smutty wore a motley mass of rags instead of one of the colonel's suits, it was guessed that this exchange of clothing had been the price of his position as driver, and in some way was connected with the former driver's disappearance.

Colonel Gruff's wounds were healing, but he did

not speak in especially complimentary terms of the comforts he had enjoyed, and endeavored to convey to us, by sundry rough metaphors, the jolting nature of the wagon in which he had been conveyed. As they had neared Manassas Gap, under various pretences, the team had been delayed. At last a wheel came off, and Smutty drove the team one side to repair it; and this delay, not being noticed, gave them the opportunity to reach our lines with the Confederate deserters, as narrated.

Colonel Gruff was tenderly cared for after his arrival in our lines, and Smutty for a time followed the ambulance on foot; but when we got into camp the next night, Smutty was driving that ambulance, as serene and as cool as a sheet of ice.

August 1, the pursuit being over, found us in camp at Beverly Ford.

Colonel Gruff was sent to the "Satterly Hospital" in Washington, where he remained until just before the Wilderness campaign, under Grant, began.

While at Beverly Ford I received a letter from my aunt, — the first I had received since writing from Fredericksburg, after the battle of Chancellorsville. She had received the letter containing the details of Weston's confession, and had communicated its contents to the squire. On searching for the tin box which contained the money, which had been concealed by Weston in the straw mattress, they had been unable to find it.

In the campaign of manœuvres, which followed, we took part, but had little or no fighting.

At Rappahannock Station an incident occurred which deserves a place in this narrative, as it concerns one of the characters to whom the reader has been introduced.

In falling back to this place, in one of the countermarches which characterized this campaign, we formed a part of the rearguard.

The engineers were destroying a long railroad bridge which spanned a gorge on the steep banks of the Rappahannock. They had destroyed the south end, and only one plank connected the shore with the bridge, twenty feet or so therefrom. The structure was heaped with inflammable material, ready to fire, when there appeared in sight, on the south side of the Rappahannock, a single Union horseman furiously pursued by rebel cavalrymen, who were shouting, and firing upon him.

The horseman, urging his horse to its utmost speed, reached the shore, and, without a moment's hesitation, coolly trotted his horse over the single plank on to the bridge. As the fore-feet of the horse struck the railroad ties of the bridge he stumbled, the cavalryman slid over his neck, and landed safely on his feet. Not so, however, the faithful beast he had ridden. He reeled back and was precipitated over the gorge, and lay mangled and dead on the rocks, sixty feet below.

Coolly removing an envelope from his belt, the

orderly presented it to the engineer officer, simply remarking on the loss of his horse, "I am sorry to lose my horse and revolver." It was Henry Grace, riding with orders from General Meade.

That winter we went into quarters at Brandy Station. The ordinary camp life was unbroken, save by court-martials and military punishments.

Our term of enlistment ended that winter, but we felt it to be a patriotic duty to re-enlist; and our desire to do so was strengthened by the rumor that General Grant would command the army in the approaching campaign.

Shortly after re-enlisting for another term of service, both Jed and I were recommended for promotion as lieutenants in our own regiments.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GRANT TAKES COMMAND.

IT was a spring day of unclouded splendor, in Virginia. The snow on the crests of the Blue Ridge, so long visible from our quarters, had disappeared. Frequent inspections and reviews foreshadowed the speedy opening of the spring campaign. Among the log huts roofed with A tents, their rude chimneys of sticks and mud capped by barrels, might be seen the glittering muskets of moving sentinels; while, here and there, groups of soldiers swept the company streets, or engaged in ordinary camp duties. Arches and other decorations of evergreen showed the characteristic pride of Union soldiers in their more permanent camps.

Under the fly of a large tent, at a rude table, our company officers were at dinner. Colonel Gruff had just returned from the Washington hospital, and was the guest of the mess; and Jed and myself, as acting lieutenants, were also present.

After dinner Colonel Gruff had taken from his pocket a Washington newspaper, and, calling for attention, read the following: "The rank of Lieutenant-General, revived by Act of Congress, passed

February 14th, has been conferred upon General Grant, by the President. The general will, by virtue of this office, take command of all the armies in the field. It is also understood that he will make his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, and direct its operations in person."

"By me sowl!" exclaimed Captain O'Keif, "byes, this means fighting, and plenty of it, too!"

"Yes," assented Colonel Gruff. "Shentlemen, dot means ve shall move soon; and ve shall soon fight and keep on fighting until ve are vipped, or the enemy is vipped," and he thumped the table excitedly with the stump of his amputated arm.

A smile went around the table, for the old soldier was seldom so demonstrative. The colonel, having thus delivered his opinion, carefully filled and lit his pipe, making rather awkward work of it with his one hand, and then sat silently smoking, as if ashamed of the emphasis of his remarks.

The prospect of fighting is not always dreaded by soldiers, since, by the very nature of their profession, it must come; yet even on the youngest soldier's face, the lines of care, which are common to those who follow a perilous profession, had begun to deepen, with thoughts of the coming campaign.

As we sat discussing the prospect of the army under the new commander, a mounted officer, dressed in a rusty uniform, came riding down the company street, and dismounted in front of our

tent, with the evident intention of tightening the girth of his saddle.

Our party saluted; and the officer of the guard near at hand, seeing him to be a general of high rank, commanded (as was customary), "Turn out the guard."

"Never mind the guard," quietly responded the officer.

Colonel Gruff now came forward, and with bluff courtesy invited the general to a seat, sending his own orderly to fasten the saddle-girth.

With a quick, penetrating glance at the colonel, the general extended his hand, saying, "Is this not Gruff, whom I knew in the Mexican war?"

"Yes, general," said the colonel, with a flush of pride at being thus recognized by his superior, "I was Corporal Gruff of the — Artillery."

I noted that the general was rather below the medium height, thin in person, but compactly built. His eyes were gray, clear, and cold; his features were regular, his forehead broad, and his face flushed as if blushing; while his mouth, seen through his close-trimmed brown beard, was straight cut, and, when he spoke, the thin, bloodless lips came together with something like a snap. His bearing was simple, and his manner one of tranquil firmness, as of conscious power in repose. Though his face was almost stony in its immobility (as if long trained to conceal any expression of thoughts), yet his personal motions were so quick as to be

almost jerky; as if the regular army drill masters' constant command, "Make your motions quickly, and then steady yourself for the next order," had become thoroughly embedded in his habits. When he removed his hat I noticed the shape of the back of his head, which formed nearly a right angle, the vertical line of which ran straight down to his collar. He remained seated but a moment, then rose quickly, as if in haste.

Colonel Gruff introduced us collectively, saying, "Shentlemen, this is Lieutenant-General Grant."

The general's horse now being ready he walked quickly to it, with his head in advance of his body. He vaulted to his saddle without use of the stirrup, and rode away, leaning far forward on his horse, with a concentrated look on his face.

"How did you know General Grant?" we exclaimed, gathering around the old colonel, for we had never heard the least expression from him, indicating such an acquaintance.

"Vel, boys, I never knew Sheneral Grant, but I knew a leetle Lieutenant Grant in de Mexican var. I helped him vonce to get a howitzer to the top of a church belfry in the city of Mexico, and we pelted some Mexicans at the San Cosme Gate."

A short time after this, all was in a bustle of preparation. The log huts were destroyed, and troops bivouacked in the field, to prevent delay in marching whenever the orders should come. At sunset

on the 4th of May, orders were issued for our regiments to move at half-past ten that night. All unnecessary fires were prohibited, taps and tattoo were beaten at the usual hours; but instead of settling to its rest, the army, with its long trains, was marched to the fords of the Rapidan, to open the campaign of 1864.

The soldiers, who, while in winter quarters, had accumulated much extra baggage, in this rapid march began throwing away their blankets and clothing on all sides. Pack mules, loaded picturesquely with pickaxes and shovels for intrenching purposes, accompanied the divisions of the army.

On the 5th of May, Griffin's division of the 5th Corps, which had been thrown out to prevent an irruption of the enemy into the roads upon which Sedgwick's corps was yet to move, encountered the van of Hill's corps, of the Confederate army, and a fierce fight took place.

It was Grant's plan that, having turned the Confederate right by the successful passage of the Rapidan, he would mask his march through the Wilderness, and then, by a rapid advance towards Gordonsville, plant himself between the Confederate army and Richmond.

The centre of Lee's line at this time was at Orange Court-House, from whence the Orange and Fredericksburg plank road and turnpike ran in parallel lines eastward. Down these roads Lee

hurled his troops upon the exposed flank of the Union army.

The Confederate commander knew every road and by-path of the Wilderness, while to the Union leader it was an unknown region.

Artillery could not be used here because of the thick undergrowth of jack oaks, pines, and entangling vines.

The Confederates soon attacked Warren's corps, whose naked flank was exposed, and thus showed that general that the enemy was in force on his front.

Information of the Confederate attack having been conveyed to Grant, the forward movement of troops by the flank was suspended, in order to meet the attack now begun by the enemy, who were hoping to entangle and insnare the Union army in this labyrinth of woods.

Hancock's corps, to which we were now attached, was at this time near Todd's Tavern. We at once began a march up the Brock road, to its intersection with the Orange plank road, to take part in the contest thus begun between the two armies.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we reached the scene of the battle, and began intrenching ourselves by felling trees and heaping soil against their trunks. Before these works were completed, however, we were ordered to attack the enemy on the plank road. The fight which now ensued baffles

description. The enemy fired at us from behind trees, bushes, stumps, and from thickets.

In advancing through the tangled undergrowth of creeping vines and low oaks and pines we could not preserve our alignments, and the left of a brigade could only determine the position of its right by the smoke from its muskets.

The nature of the fighting vexed Colonel Gruff very much. As he dismounted from his horse and led him through the bushes, in the rear of his regiment, he was heard to growl at every step, "Bushvacking! bushvacking!"

The firing, which was at first desultory, soon became fierce and continuous. There were at this time a large number of bounty men and recruits in our regiment, who had never before smelled gunpowder. This fact made our force less reliable in holding its ground than in former actions, and required constant vigilance from the file closers, who occupied a position a few steps in rear of the main line.

Occasionally some man, appalled by the terrible nature of the fighting, would break and attempt to run. The men were falling fast when a strapping Irish recruit came three times to the rear in this attempt.

Captain O'Keif collared him in his third attempt, and, whirling him around with his face to the enemy, exclaimed, "The enemy are not back here at all, man. By the holy St. Patrick, they are thicker

than bees straight ahead, as I'm pointing you."

"Over there is it, captain? Divil a man knows it better than myself. But just think of me being kilt without a praste!"

"By me sowl!" said Captain O'Keif, "an Irishman who would run wouldn't be worth a praste, and if yez don't keep yer place in line, I'll blow yer brains out."

The recruit, as he took his place in line, was heard to exclaim to his comrades, "Let us die here like men." At which O'Keif said drolly, "See what a brave man I've made of him!"

At another time, during the fiercest of the fight, Sonny, the dismounted cavalryman, arrested the flight of a foreign recruit, and addressed a few words of remonstrance to him. The recruit shook his head and said, "No understand Englesh."

At which Sonny turned the recruit with his face to the enemy, and with repeated kicks from his No. 10 shoes forced the would-be runaway into line, remarking in an aside, "That's a language anybody can understand." Such is often the by-play of battle, at which a soldier laughs even in the midst of danger.

The roar and crackle of musketry now became terrible, even to veterans. A single piece of artillery was heard beating time, as it were, to the steady roar of musketry.

While the wounded and dying were constantly being borne to the rear, an occasional skulker or coward sought to escape from peril by bandaging his arm, or with some other device, to reach that safe retreat. The colonel rudely halted this class of men, detaining them whether they belonged to his regiment or not.

The sun went down on this vast ensanguined field, which was more like miles of disconnected skirmishing than a battle. The nature of the combat was unparalleled in the history of fighting, and fully justified by its nature the dissatisfied growls of Colonel Gruff, —

"Bushvacking — miles of bushvacking! Von grand skirmish!"

As night came on, the firing died away along the line as if by mutual consent of the combatants. Men now boiled their coffee, smoked their pipes, or searched for missing comrades; and then rolled themselves in their blankets and slept under the stars more soundly than men sleep in their beds at home.

At five o'clock the next morning, when the sun's light had illumined the tangled depths of this vast forest, musket firing broke out afresh. The position of the enemy could be guessed only by the lines of white, sulphurous smoke, which rose from their muskets.

We soon made an advance of half a mile through the woods. In this advance the color bearer was

shot, and fell, exclaiming, "Don't let the flag go down!"

Sonny (whose real name was Joe Mayo) seized the standard, and carried it proudly forward into the storm of bullets. Colonel Gruff saw the act, and shouted, —

"I makes you mine color sergeant, sir!" Sonny, promoted on the field of battle, might well be proud.

During this advance through the maze of underbrush, scrub pines, and oaks, the thickets were so dense that we could not see a dozen yards right or left, and had not been able to preserve our alignments.

Our course, which hitherto had been disputed by sharpshooters and skirmishers, was now interrupted by a roar of continuous musketry which broke out from every thicket on our front.

To illustrate, let me say, to the uninitiated, that this sounded, in miniature, as if bushels of lighted fire-crackers had been thrown into miles of barrels standing in a row.

Under this heavy firing we fell back, fighting stubbornly at every step, and seeking shelter behind stumps and trees from the angry bullets that filled the air with ominous hissings.

In the smoke and confusion of this retreat, when the fire was the hottest, we found ourselves hemmed in on three sides by the enemy's infantry fire.

On examination it was found that about twenty of our company had become separated from the main line; among whom was Sonny (still carrying the flag), Jed, and myself.

In trying to get back from the encircling muskets, we came to a little clearing in the heart of this forest, where we encountered Colonel Gruff, who was leading his horse to the clearing.

Exclaiming, "We are cut off from the main line! Save yourselves! Don't be taken prisoners!" he vaulted into the saddle, and with his bridle in his teeth, and a six-shooter in his hand, dashed across the clearing.

We saw two rebel cavalrymen dart from the thicket and give chase. The veteran did not spur his horse to greater speed, though the cavalrymen were gaining on him. We saw him reach a fence, jump his horse over it, then resuming the bridle with his teeth once more, turn in his saddle and fire at his nearest pursuer. The cavalryman rolled from his saddle.

"Jerusalem, that was cool!" exclaimed Sonny.

We, meanwhile, were following at good speed in the same direction, occasionally coming to an about face to repel, or keep at a respectful distance, the enemy in our rear.

We had nearly crossed the clearing and reached the fence when a volley was fired from the woods on our left. Fortunately, most of the shot passed over our heads, though one struck the flagstaff

carried by Sonny, cutting it off above his head, near the colors.

"Drop the flag, drop it!" exclaimed several of our squad, "it draws the fire." But Sonny refused to abandon his flag, which he fixed to the staff again, saying, —

"It sha'n't be touched by a reb as long as I live!"

We had now reached a thick pine covert to the left of the course our colonel had taken. Jed and I, with the remaining members of our party, determined to make a stand here, and send out two men to reconnoitre.

Sonny volunteered for this duty. He came back to us after a few minutes and said he "guessed it was safe for us to try and reach the Brock road,' where our main line was formed. We noticed that Sonny no longer carried the flag.

In advancing through the woods we met no hinderances, though the roar of the conflict was heard all around us.

We were still advancing through the woods cautiously, keeping our alignments as far as possible, when, both on our right and on our left, there came the order, —

"Halt! Come in out of the cold, Yanks!"

The order was decisive; and we had no alternative but to die or surrender, as the protruding muskets on every side proclaimed. We had run between two lines of Confederates formed at an

angle in the woods. We were soon disarmed and marched to the rear.

Jed had been in command of our squad during the events narrated. He retained his composure, though he knew his danger of being hanged as a spy, should he be recognized by the Confederates as one who for a time had worn their uniform. In reply to my question of what he would do in such a case, he said, —

"Dick, I never think of it. When danger comes it's time enough to face it. I am in God's hands at all times. It makes but little difference when we die, since, as Colonel Gruff says, 'We must all die once;' but it does make a difference if we die doing our duty, and with our trust in God undisturbed;" and as Jed said this his face shone with that inner light which is the reflection of a pure soul.

I thought then, as I have often thought since, "This is the faith of a Christian, and the courage of a soldier."

We were kindly treated by our captors, as men usually are by those they have been fighting against.

After wearisome marching we reached Richmond, where we remained but a single day, and then, without incident worthy of recital, were sent to Lynchburg.

While here there was a little occurrence which had so important a bearing upon our prison life as to deserve mention.

During the march I observed a negro servant of one of the officers of the guard carrying an ordinary three-pint pail.

"What have you got in that pail, Sam?" I inquired.

"Massa's dinner," replied the colored man.

"Let me see it, will you?" I asked.

He removed the cover and disclosed a tempting dish of fried fish and buttered biscuit, which, as I was hungry, I at once felt that I must have. I had a new army overcoat, which had been a decided encumbrance to me since my capture, and this I offered in exchange for the pail and contents.

He glanced around to see that no one was looking, and then made the trade. How he afterwards made his peace with his master I do not know, but the little pail was so great a convenience to me in cooking, while I was a prisoner, that its value could not be rated in money. Thus incidents can never be said to be insignificant until we know their relation to that which follows.

While at Lynchburg, Jed saw one or two Confederates whom he knew, but none of them recognized him, which may have been due to the fact that he now wore a mustache and beard, which he had cultivated since leaving their lines.

We were finally embarked, with several hundred other prisoners, on box-cars, sixty or seventy men to a car. In five days we arrived at Charleston,

South Carolina, where, after being kept in the jail-yard one day and night, we were again put on board cattle-cars, and, two days later, reached Andersonville Station, Georgia, thirty-five miles south from Macon.

ANDERSONVILLE PRISON. — Page 287.

CHAPTER XXV.

ANDERSONVILLE PRISON.

OF Andersonville prison little was known by those outside of it at that period. It had been opened for the reception of captives in February, 1864, and the first instalment of victims had been transferred here from Belle Island prison at that time. We had, therefore, no conception of the place to which we were to be consigned.

The prison was used for enlisted men only; and as Jed and myself had not yet received our commissions, we still wore our sergeants' dress, and on capture our rank was judged by our uniform. We made no protest against this, as I thought Jed would stand a better chance of not being recognized among a multitude, than among the comparatively few in an officers' prison, and so it proved.

The rain was pouring in torrents when, on the 23d of May, about sundown, we arrived at Anderson Station. We were formed in single ranks on the long platform of the depot, and were there formally turned over to the prison guard.

A Confederate sergeant in gray uniform, whose neck was twisted towards one shoulder, gave the order, "All you 'ns Yanks that can write, take

one step forward." At this order the whole line advanced, for we were mostly New England soldiers; and if there were those who could not write, they would not acknowledge it.

Thinking we had misunderstood him, the sergeant repeated the order, with the same result.

A few sergeants were finally selected to take the names of ninety men each, that number, for convenience in issuing rations, composing a squad in the prison. We were marched east a short distance, by a road running through a little valley surrounded by thick pine woods, when there loomed up before us, in the moist atmosphere and gathering darkness, a long line of palisade, the sight of which gave me a shiver of foreboding and dread. The rainfall and the chill of evening oppressed me with gloom.

While halted before these walls, a little man on a horse rode up, and at some remark from a prisoner began cursing frightfully, and striking, with a cavalry sabre, at the prisoners standing in line.

It was Henry Wirtz, who commanded the interior of the prison.

"Better keep on good terms with the old man," said one of the rebel guard suggestively.

The gates before us now swung inward, and we were marched into the prison.

Many, oh, how many! never passed through those gates again, until they were carried to the graveyard trenches beyond.

Gaunt creatures, with shrunken forms and blackened faces, clothed in dirty, ragged shreds of blue, thronged around us as we entered the prison. The impress of suffering and famine was over all. Their dirt-clotted countenances, dishevelled hair, half-naked limbs, and grotesque habiliments, for a while made it impossible for us to realize that they, like ourselves, were Union soldiers. Exposure to rain and sun, starvation and confinement within the deadly embrace of these prison walls, had obliterated almost all semblance of manhood from these patriotic men. Some stared apathetically at us, as if at visitants from another world, in which they no longer had a part. From their faces all hope and cheerfulness had faded out.

Others gathered around us, and in plaintive, tremulous, but eager voices, inquired for news of the outside world from whence we came, or invited trade. "Where is Sherman?" — "What is Grant doing?" — "Got any hard-tack or coffee to trade for corn bread?" — "Do you know when we are to be exchanged?" are samples of the interrogations which came from faltering lips. The last question was the most common one. This, coming from wretched men, hollow-eyed, famine-pinched, and with scurvied, swollen faces, blue and trembling with cold, dampness, and the weakness of famine, made the questionings almost an appeal.

Though this scene brought a shiver of creeping horror over many a man among us accustomed to

face death in battle, yet we but feebly comprehended its full import then.

A revolting stench filled the moist atmosphere. Our feet mired into a wallow of excrements at every step. We constantly stumbled on squalid huts scarcely high enough to creep under. These were made of blankets, shirts, shreds of clothing, or were built up with mud and roofed with brush or twigs of pine.

Coming from ordinary scenes of war, this prison, by contrast, was so horrible as to seem to be the very jaws of death and the gates of hell. Within its deadly maw all semblance of humanity was crushed.

It appeared impossible that human beings could exist in such a place. Our feet sunk in filth at every step. We were conducted across a creek, seemingly running with excrement instead of water, which crept like a slimy, venomous serpent through the centre of the prison.

The side hill beyond, we were told, was to be our quarters. But where? The whole hillside was so crowded with huts, and human forms lying on the muddy ground, that at a first glance there appeared to be no room for us. It was only by scattering in groups of two and three at different points that we finally found the needed space to spread our blankets.

The ground selected by Jed, Sonny, and myself for our lodging-place was filthy beyond belief; but

we were too tired to find better, and it was already too dark to remedy matters, even if there were better accommodations elsewhere.

Sadly thinking of my far-off Northern home and friends, and of the terrible contrasts here, I fell into a troubled sleep.

The sun was shining brightly when I was awakened by men stumbling against me. As I arose to my feet the daylight revealed, for the first time, the whole prison area to my sight. In form the enclosure of stockade was a parallelogram, shown by after measurements to be ten hundred and ten feet in length, and seven hundred and seventy-nine feet six inches wide. The sides of this parallelogram ran north and south. It enclosed two opposite hillsides, and the valleys and plateaus back of them.

Near the centre, running from east to west, was the brook, from eight to ten feet in width, of which mention has before been made. On each side of this creek was a swampy marsh reaching to the foot of both the north and south hillsides.

There were two gates, both on the east line of the stockade, one on the plateau of the north hillside, the other the south. The stockade was built of pine logs set upright in the ground, scored slightly on the sides, so as to fit them closely together. These were firmly held together by means of a plank or slab, spiked on the outside and across the face of the logs near the top.

Sentry boxes, thirty-five in number, were scaffolded outside, close up to the stockade, so that the guard could overlook the area within. The little platform on which the guard were stationed came within four feet of the top of the stockade, and was reached by a ladder from the outside. These guards were protected from rain and sun by a shed roof, five feet above, and sloping from, the stockade.

No vegetation was in this pen. The dense growth of pines formerly covering the ground had been cleared away when the stockade was built.

As I went down the hill to wash myself at the brook, I saw, for the first time, a little railing three feet high, running eighteen feet from, and parallel with, the stockade, inside and all around it. It was made by nailing a strip of board about three inches wide to the top of posts set firmly in the ground.

"What is that for?" I asked an old prisoner.

"You'd better keep away from it if you don't want to get shot," he replied. "That's the dead line. I saw one of the guard shoot one of our old men, the other day, while he was reaching over to pick up a weed which was growing inside."

"What did he want of the weed?" I inquired wonderingly.

"Don't know. Guess he wanted it to eat; good for scurvy," was the reply.

On every side strange and terrible sights greeted me. Men were cooking at little fires scarcely large

enough to make a blaze. Dead men, with unclosed eyes, lay in the path by the side of the little huts.

Sick men with scurvied, bloated limbs were endeavoring to eat while their teeth almost dropped from their jaws. Wounded men, with festering, unhealed wounds, were lying with naked limbs, and with hair matted in the filth of their surroundings.

With inarticulate, piteous whines, they looked with their lustreless eyes or reached out their withered, feeble hands in mute appeal for help. They were covered with vermin and maggots. God in heaven! What horrors greeted every step.

Finally, after trying to assist creatures to whom no relief could come but death, I reached, through festering corruption and filth, the brook of water near the east side, bridged by two logs. The water was putrid with fecal matter, running from the marsh. Where the brook crossed the dead line and sluggishly passed out under the hindering stockade, it was comparatively clear. Here the dead line was undefined.

"Many a poor creature reaching for clear water," said an old prisoner, "has been killed at this spot, by a bullet from the guard."

I reached down from the logs, and, filling my canteen, took a drink. The water was tepid and had a boggy taste; it was covered with a greasy scum, which, it was said, came from the cook-house

on the margin of the branch, and just outside the prison limits.

The sinks of the rebel guard were above on the stream, and their filth came into the brook for prisoners to drink.

After washing myself I attempted to make a shorter cut through the marsh to the hillside. Its passage was impossible; or in my repugnance to the filth in which my feet deeply mired, I felt it to be so.

The prisoners had used the marsh for sinks. Here had accumulated the terrible filth of the prison, mixed with the soil by the trampling of many feet. The whole was a mass of festering corruption.

The area of the quagmire was originally a boggy swamp, partially covered by stagnant water, over which gathered a green, unhealthy scum. It was now infested to the depth of twelve to thirty-six inches by writhing maggots, bred from this filth, as there was no drainage from this camp of twenty thousand men. The stench which arose from this marsh had in it alone the seeds of a pestilence.

This is but a faint general picture of the scenes which met our gaze that morning.

I returned to my comrades by the beaten path, refreshed by my bath, notwithstanding all the horrors I had encountered.

That day Jed, Sonny, and I formed a mess pre-

paratory to building a hut, and making the best of our surroundings.

We had had no food since the day previous, and were very hungry. One of my comrades bought a johnny-cake of one of the prisoners, and from it four of us made a breakfast. It was poorly cooked, and might be described as stuck together with water and a slight heat. But hunger is a good substitute for nice cooking, and we ate it greedily, notwithstanding the miscellaneous filth we found in it.

We now set to work to construct a hut to protect ourselves from the rain and sun. In this we were very fortunate, as we possessed four woollen blankets and one of rubber.

For some reason our party had not been searched for valuables or robbed of their blankets, as was commonly the case with those who came into the prison. It is doubtful if three men in the entire prison could be found so well provided as we were.

Two were appointed to prepare the ground for our habitation while Jed went in search of some sticks to make a framework for the hut. After a persistent search he finally bought a handful of sticks, for which he had paid two dollars in greenbacks, from one of the prisoners.

The ground was levelled by digging into the side hill, and the clean soil from beneath replaced the filthy surface soil. This we tramped hard and

level. The embankment made by the cut in the hillside was smoothed and sloped slightly back. Two pieces of stick were set firmly in the ground at each end of the level space, and across these was lashed another for a ridge-pole. Two other sticks, lower than the ridge-pole, with a stick across fastened like it, were set for the front. Two of our best blankets were then pinned together with wooden pins, and over this framework the blankets were stretched, and pinned down to the embankment in the rear and at the sides by means of small sharp stakes driven into the ground. The other side was then fastened to the lower ridge-pole for the front.

We now had two blankets to sleep on, and the poncho blanket mentioned, and which in case of need might be hung up in front to protect us from rain.

Such was the habitation that excited the envy of our more miserable comrades.

During the day we bought some Indian meal and cooked some mush in my little tin pail, for it was not until four o'clock that afternoon that rations were issued to us.

While engaged in cooking, an old prisoner, seeing my little tin pail, said, —

"If you want to sell that tin bucket, young feller, I'll give you three dollars in greenbacks and a piece of johnny-cake for it."

I declined to trade, whereupon he said, —

"Your head is level, young feller. Whatever else you sell, don't part with that tin bucket or your blanket. It will be worth more to you than a hundred dollars, for you'll stand some chance to live here if you hold on to them."

I thought at the time that his estimation of the value of the things was exaggerated, but it proved to be a just one, as shown by my subsequent experience.

It began raining that afternoon in a steady, persistent manner, and continued with but little interruption during the remainder of the month.

About four o'clock on that first day we had rations issued to us of Indian meal, which had, however, a preponderance of cob in its composition; also a few small beans or cow peas. The ration of Indian meal was equal to about an ordinary teacupful to each man, and the beans could be held in the half-closed palm of the hand.

Such was our introduction to the living death of Andersonville, and thus it was that we settled down to the common life of prisoners. As bitter and terrible as was the opening scene described, it afterwards became inexpressibly worse, month by month, during our stay there.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LIFE AND DEATH IN PRISON.

OUR hut was very comfortable, and it was fortunate for us that it was so, for during the succeeding month, rain fell persistently for twenty-three days. This, to men comfortably housed and fed, would not have caused great suffering, but to the squalid inmates of Andersonville it was prolific of disease, suffering, and death.

The great mass of prisoners had no shelter except such as they had made of their scanty garments or blankets; while large numbers, especially of those newly arrived, had none at all. This crowd of men was also nearly destitute of fuel for cooking, and of cooking utensils.

The difficulty of preparing their rations (even when they had food) during this rainfall, together with the cold and discomfort and filth produced thereby, had a depressing effect, which strong men could scarcely resist.

The last day of June there were twenty thousand suffering men within the deadly embrace of these prison walls, where all finer sensibilities were crushed in the struggle for life.

The absence of soap, together with the soot from

fires made of pitch-pine roots or branches, soon begrimed our faces almost beyond recognition. Washing without soap simply distributed and rubbed in the grime, so, to one not used to the sight, we appeared to be black men. Habit, however, so accustomed us to these disfigurements that they were scarcely perceivable to ourselves.

Among these scenes Jed's high courage and almost womanly sympathy sustained and encouraged all with whom he came in contact.

From our arrival in prison we had mingled but little with other prisoners, and had attempted to keep scrupulously clean.

Like most captives, we had only the clothing we had worn into the prison, and an attempt to wash these garments without soap destroyed without cleansing them. We therefore abandoned all idea of washing our clothes, and only practised daily bathing our persons at the brook.

One day, thinking to make a shorter cut to the stream, we came to the bottom of the north hillside, where, in an attempt to cover the pestilential filth, the quagmire had been filled in with soil excavated from the hill. In this way an area of a hundred square feet or more had been made habitable. Here the prisoners had begun to erect little huts with sides built of mud, and other shelter.

We found its unoccupied portions crowded with dead and dying men, some lying with naked limbs swollen and black with scurvy, others with hair

matted in the surrounding filth, unable because of weakness to escape. They had come hither, and had been unable to return. Some, too feeble to articulate, held out their wasted hands with feeble cries for help, looked at us appealingly with their lustreless eyes, or pointed to their trembling, bloodless lips, in mute entreaty for water or food.

We stopped and tried to help them, gave them water, and attempted to wash the filth from their persons. Some of these poor creatures had festering sores, in which were gathered maggots and vermin.

Jed said but little, but tears ran down his face, and his utterances were choked by sobs as he tried to speak words of comfort to those to whom no comfort could come. We could give them no food, for which there was a common appeal: we had none.

Our sympathies were so aroused by the pitiable condition of these men, that their anguish seemed more than we could bear. We had not then learned the terrible truth, — that here we must resolutely close the avenues of human sympathy, or quickly be exterminated by its re-action on ourselves.

The best philosophy was to do all possible for suffering comrades, keeping in mind the fact that one could not really help them with sympathy. A harsh sentiment, but the only one to adopt by such as did not care to become in turn an object of pity, or to be crowded out of existence by the pressure of attendant miseries.

The mental is to the physical, in such scenes, as three to one. That man who could direct the condition of his mind by force of will, and not leave it to be the plaything of circumstances, survived these long and agonizing imprisonments, for minds that are controlled by will are often superior to the simple wants of the body.

While engaged in trying to relieve these poor creatures, we came upon a middle-aged man lying in the filth. After we had washed his face and hands there was a look on his face, or an expression in his eyes, that reminded me of some one I had known. I tried in vain to recall where I had seen him before. We helped him to his feet, and in answer to our question of where his friends were, he told us that he had no acquaintances in the prison.

This was not an isolated case. There were many such.

"Why not take him in with us?" said Jed. "We've got room for another in our 'shebang.'"

I was about to resist this, but the appealing and familiar look on the face of the man we had rescued, decided me to do as Jed suggested.

"If Joe Mayo" — Sonny's real name — "don't object, we'll take him into our mess," I replied. So Robinson, for thus he called himself, became an inmate of our hut, and with his new surroundings gradually gained strength.

At the time of our coming into the prison there

were about fifteen thousand men there, but into this crowded theatre of death there flowed a constant procession of new victims from the battle-fields of Grant's and Sherman's armies. They brought into the prison the buoyancy of hope and youth: they soon became sick and squalid, hopeless and idiotic, or were destroyed by the intense cruelty of their prison life. The stockade seemed to take on personality. Like the vision the great Florentine saw,

> "It seemed as if 'gainst me it were coming,
> With head uplifted and with ravenous hunger
> So that the very air was made afraid."

Its gates poured out a constant stream of death, met by an incoming tide of living victims.

In July, 2,204 prisoners died; in August, 3,081. Scurvy, diarrhœa, and every disease caused by starvation and overcrowding, intensified its horrors and increased the death rates.

Yet starvation, singular as the statement may seem, decreased as well as increased the prison death rates. Fevers could not take hold of men destitute of fatty tissues, and had the prisoners been well fed while in its crowded condition, fever would have swept the prison like the simoon of the desert.

In July the density of human life inside the stockade was so great that, after taking out the dead line and the quagmire, there was left only

about fifteen square feet of space to each person. This would be a ratio of density equivalent to six millions of people to the square mile.

It is a well-established fact that the death rates of a city are in a direct ratio with the density of its population, and hence the terrible mortality at Andersonville. Want of proper and sufficient food, and want of shelter from rain and sun, added to this mortality.

On our arrival we had some money, with which we bought wood of prisoners who had procured it for sale in various ways. The scarcity of wood, and the way in which it was sometimes procured, is illustrated by the following incident.

I was on my way to the brook with Joe, to get water, and at the same time was on the lookout for wood at a reasonable price. As I went down the little path that led to the brook, we came upon a prisoner named John Moran, whose acquaintance I had previously made, sitting patiently beside a dead comrade.

"This is one of my chums who died last night," he explained. "I've tried to be kind to poor Bob, for he was a good, brave fellow; you can't do much for a chum here, though. This boy and I have fought and marched and been prisoners together, and now the poor fellow is dead."

Observing near him a pile of pine branches I inquired, —

"Don't you want to sell some of your wood?"

"Tain't mine, it's my chum's," he replied.

"Where did you get it?"

"Swapped off a dead man for it." Seeing my puzzled look he explained, —

"When one of our boys gets sick we take as good care of him as we can; but after he is dead, we keep a sharp lookout to see that no one steals him to carry him outside to the dead-house. You see, old chap, if we didn't keep our eyes peeled, some other fellers around here would grab our dead man and swap him off for a wood-pile."

Sonny gave a prolonged and characteristic whistle, while my astonished look led to a further explanation.

"Why, don't you understand? me and my chum are going to carry this man in our blanket to the dead-house, just outside the gate, and when we are returning we can pick up enough wood to last a month. Why, that dead man is worth a ten-dollar bill to me."

I soon found out the truth of this statement; and it was seldom that a prisoner was fastidious enough to lose the "wood-pile," represented by a dead comrade, for mere sentiment. Meanwhile, dry wood littered the ground outside the palisade, and a pine forest was within a few rods of the prison.

I had often noticed, as in this case, a small piece of brown paper pinned upon the breast of the dead man, with his name, company, regiment, State,

and date of death written upon it. I inquired who placed it there.

"The sergeant of a squad," was the reply, "is supposed to attend to that. He gets an extra ration for labelling the dead and dealing out the grub; but if we didn't do it ourselves, like's not, he'd claim our dead man."

The scene will, at a first glance, impress the reader as unfeeling and brutal; and yet this man was brave and generous, as the reader will hereafter learn. Death was so common, and often so happy a release from suffering, the struggle for life was so intense, that death lost its sacredness, and the kindliest of comrades did not neglect to help himself in this manner.

It was common to see a man caring for a dying comrade with great tenderness, and with an admirable sacrifice of his own wants, and then show fight if any one attempted, after death, to cheat him out of his right to carry the corpse to the dead-house.

Jed was soon elected sergeant of our squad of ninety men. It was one of the duties of this officer to draw rations and distribute them to his squad.

Our food was so meagre that men were querulous over its distribution, and it was therefore needful that the person who drew and distributed the rations should have the confidence of the men to whom they were issued. Jed's mingled firmness and good nature, with the confidence men instinc-

tively had in his goodness, made this selection a judicious one.

The sergeant of a squad was entitled to an extra ration, but this Jed never took. The squads of ninety were also divided into smaller squads of ten or fifteen for convenience in dividing rations. The new prisoners coming into the stockade were put into the old detachments, which in this way were kept full.

The teams with rations usually came in at the north gate. These rations consisted of Indian meal and sometimes of sides of bacon. As a whole there was a large quantity, but when subdivided among twenty or thirty thousand men it gave to each one but a small quantity.

Shortly after Jed's appointment I attended the drawing of rations at the main or northern gate. The rations were brought in large wagons drawn by mules, driven by colored men, and superintended, in some cases, by prisoners detailed for this purpose.

A street or path to which was given the name of Broadway, led from the gate through the stockade from east to west. Here, at ration time, was gathered a motley crowd. With eager, hungry eyes they watched each division of the food, the sight of which seemed to have a strange fascination for the hungry wretches, long unused to full stomachs. They crowded to the wagons to get a sight of each bag of meal or piece of meat.

The attempt to grasp a morsel which sometimes fell from the wagon, the piteous expression of disappointment on their pinched and unwashed faces if they failed, the involuntary exclamations, and the wistful, hungry look, had in it a pathos not easily described.

I once remarked to Jed that I thought it singular that men should aggravate themselves by constantly looking at food which they could not get to eat.

"God help them!" said Jack Moran, who was standing near, "it means life or death to them and to us all."

Jack, of whom I have before made mention, was a large man, thin and somewhat bent, though not by age. His head, on which bristled coarse black hair, was large, his forehead broad and knotty, and his mouth square cut. There was in his face and manner an indescribable something which showed nerve, will, and endurance.

While there was nothing in his dress to betoken it, there was that in his manner which led me to believe that he had been a sailor.

"This food," said he, "draws men as money does on 'change. It's like a magnet to them. Look at that swarm of flies and gnats on the food: they are bred from the festering marsh below. We couldn't eat such food but for our terrible famine. Most of the men here seem to have but two ideas, — patriotism and hunger. You would

think that any of these men would accept of an offer to go out and work at their trades for the sake of food, but they won't do it. Hungry as they look, patriotism seems here to have survived even a sense of decency. A few days ago I saw men like these mob a Confederate officer, who came in to get shoemakers. He offered them food, rations of tobacco, clothes, and shelter. They wouldn't go."

After the drawing of rations, a dense throng of prisoners always gathered near the north gate to trade. One with tobacco cut in little bits not larger than dice might be seen trying to trade it for rations. Another could be heard crying out, "Who will trade a soup bone for Indian meal?" "Who'll trade cooked rations for raw?" "Who'll trade beans for wood?" While others with small pieces of dirty bacon an inch or two in size, held on a sharpened stick, would drive a sharp trade with some one whose mouth was watering for its possession. But for its misery, the scene would often have been intensely comical.

The dirty faces, anxious looks, and grotesque garments (old prisoners sometimes wearing nothing but a pair of drawers) and the loud cries, so much in contrast with the usual value of the article offered, had a humorous side not hard to appreciate even by men as miserable as themselves. The struggles of these thousands, all striving to better their condition by barter and trade, was

pathetic. How each bettered his condition by the process of trade I could never learn.

"I usually eat what food I get as soon as I can cook it," said Moran, "for if I attempt to divide it into three meals, I suffer constantly from the fear that I may lose it. The simplest way is to eat all you get at once and so save yourself further worry and aggravation."

I found this good philosophy, for if a prisoner ate his entire day's rations at once, he did not have too large a meal, as no one ever got enough at any one time to satisfy hunger. And while very few instances were known of prisoners stealing food from acquaintances, there were many half-demented, wandering tatterdemalions, who might chance to come upon an unguarded ration, and eat it in the most innocent and absent-minded manner before its owner could rescue it.

"Moran's remedy," as Jed called it, was the only real security for an unconsumed ration. That there was good in the method, was shown by the fact that Jed and myself, who adopted the "remedy," retained our strength better than the majority of prisoners.

Joe Mayo, or as we have more often called him, "Sonny," suffered from perpetual hunger.

"I'm tightening my belt every day," said Joe. "Heaven knows when I shall come together in fatal collapse. I tell yer, fellers, we've got to go into some kind of business. There's Jack Moran,

he sells 'sour beer,' with a little 'lasses and ginger in it. I'm goin' into somethin' to fill up on."

Here, it is needless to say, Sonny expressed a thought that Jed and I had discussed many times. We had not long been prisoners before we discovered that men here, as in other conditions in life, in order to "get on," and preserve life, must adopt some trade or business. This necessity made men ingenious. Some set up as bakers, and bought flour and baked biscuits which they sold to such as had money to buy. The ovens which were built showed such ingenuity as to extort expressions of surprise from the Confederates who occasionally visited us. The soil contained a red precipitate of iron which was very adhesive. This was made into rude bricks by mixing the earth with water, and the oven was built of these over a mould of sand. After being left to harden in the sun for a few days the sand was removed, a fire was kindled, and the oven was ready for use.

Others made wooden buckets to hold water, whittling out the staves and making the hoops with a jack-knife. Others purchased (of outside parties) sheet tin, generally taken from the roofs of railway cars, and with a railway spike and a stone for tools, made small camp kettles, without solder, by bending the pieces ingeniously together. These were eagerly purchased by those who had money. As no cooking utensils were possessed by the prisoners,

except such as they had brought into prison with them, these tinmen were benefactors.

Others tinkered broken-down watches, the object of their owners being simply to make them "go" long enough to effect a trade. The purchaser was usually a Confederate, who found these watch owners easier to interview before the trade than afterwards, when he desired to bring them to an account for selling watches that refused to go unless carried by the purchaser.

Others fried flap-jacks of Indian meal, and sold them hot from the griddle for ten cents each. Among the professional men were brewers, who vended around the camp, beer made of Indian meal soured in water. This was sold for vinegar, and proclaimed by the venders to be a cure for scurvy and diarrhœa, but was principally used as a refreshing drink.

Moran had added ginger and molasses to the compound, and made, as he termed his success, a "boom" by vending it. He became so rich as to buy food, and so regained his health and strength.

Another occupation was cooking beans, and also mush, and selling them. Broadway, near the gate, was the scene of most of the trading done in camp.

Here also could be seen gamblers with dirty "sweat boards," on which could be staked five or ten cents. The eager throng which pressed around the anxious, hungry vender of cooked beans was duplicated often at the gamblers' board.

Shortly after the foregoing conversation about going into business, Joe absented himself from our quarters most of the time, except at rations, for several days. We noticed that he had cut the buttons off his coat, and also that a watch-chain was missing from his visible possessions. On noticing these symptoms Jed said, "Joe has gone into business, I guess." And so it proved.

I was on Broadway to assist Jed in drawing the squad rations, when we heard some one roaring out, "Stewed beans with vinegar on tew 'em."

Now vinegar was a much desired article among scurvied men, and one which they naturally craved, and consequently there was a great rush to see, if not to taste, the unusual article proclaimed.

"That's Sonny's voice," said Jed. When we had got through the crowd near enough to be heard, we said, "Joe, Joe! let us taste your vinegar." Jed took the first taste, and made up a disgusted face. It was nothing but sour beer.

Joe was having a rush of trade, and got "shut" of his beans, as he expressed it, wonderfully quick.

For a few days Sonny looked quite contented and happy; but all flowers fade, and so did Joe's flower of prosperity. He came into the hut one day with a most woe-begone air, and after some questioning as to the cause of his melancholy, confessed that during a spell of dull trade he had eaten up his entire stock in trade, and had no means to

begin again in the morning. He was "busted," as he called it, by this one act of indiscretion.

"What made you such a doggoned fool as to eat yer beans?" queried Kentucky, who was present.

"Well, plague it!" confessed Sonny dubiously, "just at that time my appetite was a blasted sight bigger than my brains."

After this Sonny, naturally brave and courageous, got the scurvy, lost heart, and gradually sickened, like many others in the prison.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN THE JAWS OF DEATH.

AFTER this shipwreck of his business, Joe became despondent and hopeful by turns. He had what old prisoners called "exchange on the brain." He "took too much stock," as Moran expressed it, in the ill-defined rumors of an exchange, with which the prisoners were constantly deluded. The high hopes excited were followed by corresponding depression.

Moran, who now often visited us, remonstrated with Joe. "You will get out just as soon if you don't believe everything you hear about such matters. Keep up a general hopefulness, but don't tie to false hopes."

During July Joe complained of a sore foot. He had several times been down to the quagmire, to tread out, with his bare feet, pine knots and roots for fuel to cook our food. Here let me explain that, terrible as this swamp was, men could be seen at all hours thus engaged, so great was the want of fuel. Joe had a scratch on his foot, which had become inoculated with the poison of the swamp.

One morning he came into the hut with the tears coursing down his dirty face, crying in the most

disconsolate tones, "I've got the darnedest sore toe you ever saw."

All day Joe sat with his foot in his hands, crying like a child, and repeating in dismal tones, "I've got an awful sore toe." There certainly never was such howling over a sore toe before. We ceased to laugh or smile, however, when we found the poor fellow's leg swollen to the hip.

The condition of low vitality among the prisoners made the poison of the swamp terrible when it got into the slightest wound.

After some debate, at Joe's request we concluded to take him to the south gate, where surgeons were stationed each morning to determine who were fit subjects for the hospital, which at our coming had been inside the prison, but was now outside. As the number who were admitted was determined by the number who died, there was no certainty of getting a patient admitted simply because he needed treatment.

Scores died daily inside the stockade whom no medical officer had ever seen, and if they had they could not have attended them there. Some mornings the surgeons did not come to the gates at all, and the throng of miserables turned hopelessly away.

Jed and I assisted Joe to the south gate. The sight here was one we had not before witnessed. A packed mass of men, some carrying stretchers on which were laid the dead, with unclosed eyes, dirt-

clotted faces, and falling jaws, mingled with the crowd. Here, also, awaited the sick and dying. Those borne on stretchers were sometimes overturned in the crowd, those limping on crutches were rudely jostled by the miserable throng. When at last the gates were thrown open, those carrying the dead jostled against the sick, and the whole mass struggled and shrieked, clamored and surged, in one terrible mass of suffering. Such was the scene that met our gaze as we conducted Joe to the gate.

"Take me back, take me back!" cried Joe, shuddering. "I'd rather die than attempt to pass through the gate in this awful crowd."

That afternoon the quartermaster came to our hut, and said that he understood that Joe was a blacksmith, and if he would go out and work at his trade they would have him doctored and well fed, and he'd soon get well.

"You needn't take the oath," explained the Confederate officer. "We want you to take the place of a man that's to be sent to the front."

Joe at first had opened his eyes wide with delight at the proposition, but now shook his head and said, —

"No, sir! I'm pretty far gone, and I'm pretty low down and dirty, but I won't work for a secesher. No, sir; not if I know Joe!"

"You are a doggoned fool to die in here when you can get out and live," was the contemptuous exclamation of the officer, as he turned away.

"Maybe I am," groaned Joe, "but I couldn't look my old dad in the face again after playing traitor."

Daily Joe grew thinner and thinner. Early one morning, not long after, I was awakened by Jed, who said, "I believe Joe is dying."

Joe, on my approach, looked up at me with something of his old brightness, saying, "Let me be buried with the flag."

"His mind wanders, poor fellow," said Robinson.

"Pray for me, Jed," feebly ejaculated Joe, not noticing Robinson's remark. And as we all knelt by his side, while holding his hand, Jed repeated that sweetest, simplest, and most comprehensive of all prayers, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

The first few words the sufferer repeated feebly after him, but when we arose from our knees poor Joe's eyes had no answering look. He was dead.

Thus suddenly men died all over the prison. At one moment I have seen a comrade eating, or trying to eat, his rations, and the next found him dead. It seemed that if the will failed a prisoner for a moment only, it left him stranded on the shoals of death.

We were preparing Joe's body for the grave that day by washing his person. While removing his clothing, Robinson gave a start of surprise and exclaimed, "What is this!" There was a heavy cloth of some kind wrapped around the upper part of Joe's body. When unrolled it proved to be our

regimental flag. He had carried it in his last battle folded around his body.

A crowd of prisoners collected around us, and tears came to their eyes at sight of the dear old flag.

"Let it be buried with him. He was a common man, but he was a hero," said Moran, when we told him of the circumstances which the reader already knows.

Tears ran down our faces as we once more wrapped him in the flag he had carried so bravely in the fight, — a fitting shroud for a soldier.

A member of the burial squad afterwards informed us that Joe's wish had been complied with, and that he had been buried in the graveyard trench with the flag he loved folded about him.

Such were the heroes who died here by thousands, that this Republic might live. They could starve and die, but they could not desert the cause of their country, even to save their lives.

It was my custom since I had been a prisoner, to visit the south gate when new prisoners came into the stockade, to get news from our armies. In this way I not only managed to keep very well informed of the progress of our armies in the field, but had also met a number of acquaintances.

One afternoon at the close of a hot day, I had visited the gate to see this incoming tide, which daily fed the prison. Among the new prisoners I recognized Henry Grace. I spoke to him, but he

did not know me, so changed was I by hunger, scurvy, and filth. He finally remembered me, and the first question he asked was the same that I had put to old prisoners when I first entered the prison, —

"Why don't you keep yourselves clean here?"

I tried to explain to him, but, like all other new prisoners, he could not understand.

Jed was delighted to make the acquaintance of a prisoner so bright and clean. Grace's coming seemed to give new life to all of us for a while, and he was invited to take poor Joe Mayo's place in our mess.

Early the next morning, Grace awakened me by saying, —

"Where do you wash?"

I explained that we washed at the brook, and offered to accompany him thither. As we passed on our way we could see the hill slopes crowded with little huts. Scarcely a sign of life could be seen at this early hour in camp. It was a corralled army sleeping. Perhaps there was never seen so much of human misery massed together and silent. The stillness was gradually broken; here and there little fires appeared, and soon the whole camp was awakened, to battle for one more day with the doom that overshadowed it.

The filthy stream and its surroundings excited Grace's disgust, and at first he refused to bathe in it. But he overcame his repugnance on being told

that it was cleaner in the morning than at any other time.

In July, when the news reached us of Stoneman's raid, the expectations of the prisoners were roused to the highest pitch. The rebels were so alarmed that they began firing shell over our heads.

General Winder had the grounds staked off with white flags for ranges, and issued an order to open fire on the stockade with the artillery, if the Yankee cavalrymen came within seven miles of it. This we did not know at the time.

About the 7th of July, the captured cavalrymen of Stoneman's command came in as prisoners, and told us the news of his capture and the consequent failure of the raid. This raiding column had reached the outskirts of Macon.

Thus one by one perished the hopes of release, except by death, of the miserables in "Camp Sumter."

Our rations steadily became worse and less. The meal was principally of cob ground with the corn, while the beans were very wormy. They soon began to issue cooked rations to about one-third of the prisoners. These were brought into the prison in wagons in which the dead had been carried to the trenches.

The foul marsh gave out its deadly stench, contaminating the air for miles around. The death rates increased constantly. The long, terrible days dragged slowly by, and yet there came no word of

hope, except the cheering news of a victory by Sherman.

In July there were thirty-five thousand inmates of the stockade. Then the prison was enlarged by an addition on the north side, which made the area sixteen hundred feet in length by ten hundred and ten feet in width, and we got the timber which separated the old from the new stockade for fuel.

Shortly after this an immense rainfall, accompanied by thunder and lightning, caused a freshet which swept away the stockade at the points where the brook entered and left the prison. Before the stockade was carried away, the quagmire was flooded; and when the lower stockade was broken by this flood, the water poured out with such volume and strength as to remove the fecal filth and maggots which had accumulated to the depth of several feet.

If the prisoners had at this time made one general rush they could have overpowered the guard and escaped. What they could have done after that is another question. Had they in such an event kept together in large numbers, they could not have been fed from the country, and if they scattered they were liable to be captured or shot down in detail. The chief cause of not making a break at this time, however, was want of organization and the demoralization of hunger.

The Confederates soon had artillery and infantry stationed at the broken portions of the stockade.

After this storm a spring of pure water was discovered inside the dead line, trickling down the north hillside. It was about half-way between the north gate and the brook which ran through the prison.

As many marvels have been related of this so-called "Providence Spring," it is well perhaps to explain its origin. The whole north hillside was springy land. Quite a number of prisoners had availed themselves of this fact by digging shallow wells, and thus obtaining water. But these wells soon became contaminated with filth, and the edges trampled and muddy, so that they were but little used.

After the discovery of "Providence Spring," prisoners were allowed to construct a spout by nailing two pieces of board together at right angles, one end of which was thrust into the running spring, in such a manner as to catch the water. The spout was pointed slightly down hill and nailed to the dead line. This conducted a stream of pure water into the stockade. The prisoners after this might have been seen formed in two and four ranks, patiently waiting in the heat, by thousands, to fill their canteens, cups, and buckets, with its cool waters.

I was told that this spring had long been known to the people of that region, but that during the construction of the stockade it had been filled up.

The freshet had removed the soil again, and the

spring had burst out afresh, giving its pure waters to the suffering Union soldiers. This is probably the true solution of its sudden and salutary appearance. In any case, it was not extraordinary, for a gulley alone, made by the water running swiftly down the hillside, was sufficient to account for its existence in a place so springy.

Moran had now moved his quarters nearer us, and often assisted us by his advice.

A big French Canadian, known in prison as "Big Pete," and having a large capital of brute strength and courage, had, about the time of our coming into the prison, "set up" as Chief of Police. He had gradually enlarged his sphere of action to that of Judge; and if his trials were comical to the spectator, they were seldom so to the culprit.

One of my acquaintances described his fist (with a vividness which showed intimate knowledge) as being as "big as a teakettle."

Big Pete became a terror to evil-doers; and to strengthen his rule, he appointed policemen to execute his commands. Moran was one of these officials.

One night, shortly after Grace's arrival, we heard a voice outside calling Grace by name.

"What is wanted?" inquired one of us.

"You keep still and none of you will be hurt. Our business is with Grace," was the reply.

Grace had by this time got to his feet, stepped outside the shelter, and confronted the intruders.

We soon heard a desperate struggle, and rushed to the scene. Two or three men had Grace, who, though small, was an athlete, in their grasp. We attempted to assist him, but were beaten back. Others came to the assistance of the raiders. Suddenly a tall, dark form was seen to spring in among the raiders and deal them terrible blows with a club, until, groaning and shrieking, they scattered in the darkness.

The man who had thus opportunely come to our assistance was Moran.

"What is the meaning of all this?" we inquired.

"The raiders were trying to rob the boy!" explained Moran. Grace had been badly choked, but was otherwise uninjured.

"How came they to pitch into you so soon?" asked Moran, who understood their methods.

"They asked me to hand out my watch and money. I refused, and they went for me," said Grace.

Here in explanation let me say that these raiders were a band of thieves under the leadership of one Bill Collins, better known to prisoners as "Mosby, the raider." This band of ruffians, it was afterwards ascertained, was largely made up of bounty jumpers, who had at first deserted to the Confederates. They, not pleased with their society, had sent them to Andersonville, that they might be exchanged for their own men.

These rascals had first begun their operations at

Belle Isle and Salisbury, where they were known as the "Muggers." Their methods were to find out during the day the name and stopping-place of such as had money, and then at night call them out and rob them.

Not long after this the gang became so bold that they murdered men who refused to submit to being robbed. About eighty of them were arrested by Big Pete's prison police, with the assistance of the Confederate quartermaster, Duncan, and a squad of Confederate soldiers. A jury was empanelled, counsel for the prosecution and for the accused selected, and six of them were tried and found guilty of theft and murder.

On the eleventh day of July, 1864, these six prisoners were hanged on a gallows inside the stockade. Considering the crimes common to a city of thirty thousand people, under the restraints of law, it was wonderful that among men suffering so terribly, and where there were no restraints except those imposed by themselves, that so little violence occurred at Andersonville.

After this execution the camp was as orderly as any military camp, and any one having authority could keep order.

Moran one day introduced us to a prisoner known as "Kentucky." He was bent down and starved to a shadow by long imprisonment, but he possessed audacity and courage, and was a natural leader of men.

One day he remarked, "I say, stranger, look a-hyer, we've got a right smart hole dug, out yon."

I did not comprehend, and exclaimed with some surprise, "What?"

"A tunnel," responded he. "Don't you see? our boys have got one a'most dug, and we are goin' to open the hole, and git to God's country."

Moran, who had been listening, said, "Yes; I brought Kentucky up here, so that if he liked the looks of you he could tell you about it."

About dark, in company with Jed and Moran, I visited a hut near the dead line, where four of Kentucky's chums lay on a blanket, smoking and talking. I was introduced.

"Where's the tunnel?" I inquired. One of them quickly rolled back the blanket on which they had been lying, removed the earth from the back of the hut, near the dead line, revealing a poncho blanket. This was pulled away, showing a hole much like a small well. This was covered by sticks.

"Here is the entrance," said Kentucky, clearing away the sticks and getting into the hole. "Come on;" and with this brief command he disappeared, and I followed.

At the mouth of the tunnel Kentucky had picked up a couple of haversacks and half a canteen, which he used as a scoop. "Don't rise your back up, or the plaguy thing will cave in on us," said Kentucky.

It was hot and uncomfortable in the tunnel, and

before I had crawled very far I felt like backing out; but as there was no room in which to turn around, and as others were behind me, I could not do so.

Kentucky soon scooped up a haversack full of soil and passed it to me; I passed it to Jed behind me; he passed it to Moran, and so on, until the sack reached the mouth of the tunnel, where it was taken out, carried to the swamp and dumped. In this way we worked nearly two hours in the intense darkness.

I did not have entire confidence in the tunnel, and this feeling was increased by Kentucky's cool remark that "if I rose my back like a cat the thing mought cave."

I came out of the tunnel at eleven o'clock. I knew the time by the guard calling from post to post, "Eleven o'clock and all is well," as was their custom at each hour of the night.

The next morning, Kentucky came to our hut and said, —

"I've concluded to open the tunnel to-night. Come up to our shebang 'bout noon, and we'll talk it over."

As I was making my way to his quarters at the appointed time, I was met by Kentucky, who said in quiet tones, —

"Don't go up there, our fixin's are bust. That doggoned old Duncan (the rebel quartermaster) came along this morning with his durned iron

prod and slumped it into our tunnel. He has set a lot of our boys at work filling it in."

It seems that it was the custom of that functionary, Duncan, every morning to prod around inside the dead line with a long, sharpened iron bar to discover tunnels.

The tunnels usually ran near the surface of the ground, and were held up by the interlacing fibres of roots inside the dead line. Fresh soil scattered on the black prison ground usually excited suspicion, and the prod of the quartermaster did the rest. In this manner scores of tunnels were detected.

At one time the rebels discovered a tunnel over a hundred feet long. At another time the stockade was undermined in four places, for the purpose of breaking it and liberating the prisoners. At the time set for breaking the stockade the rebels announced that they were aware of the plan, and had the names of the ringleaders, and at the first demonstration would take them out and punish them.

"There is no mistake but that the outside authorities were terribly frightened, and justly so," said Moran, when narrating the incident.

Although the tunnel had failed, it set us to thinking up plans of escape, and led to results shown in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TUNNELLING OUT.

ONE month after the scenes narrated in the foregoing chapter, a group had gathered around our hut.

That terrible day was almost at its close. The tall pines outside the western limit of the palisade, now that its inmates no longer needed shade, threw their lengthened shadows within the enclosure.

The stench from the swamp, absorbed in part by the heat during the day, polluted the air with pestilential breath.

The prison rations had just been issued, and thirty thousand men were for the hour intent on cooking, eating, or clamoring to exchange their scanty rations with each other in the vain hope of getting more palatable food.

As the shadows lengthened, the discordant outcries softened into confused murmurs, and men gathered in little groups around their squalid huts to talk of home or food.

The ragged, famine-pinched group at our hut were talking of exchange. They had previously

exhausted their ingenuity in discussing the manner in which they would have food cooked when they once more reached "God's Country," as they not irreverently call the Union lines.

Moran, who had taken no part in the conversation, now impatiently exclaimed, —

"What is the use in talking? Let us *do* something to get away from this awful place, where men die like sheep, without a hand raised against their enemies!"

There was silence for a moment, as if the proposition involved consequences too serious for unpremeditated talk. A voice, high-pitched and tremulous with weakness, finally replied, —

"I'm in for any plan, Jack, that will give us a reasonable chance for life."

The speaker, who had been sitting in a crouching position, here looked up and revealed the almost girlish face of Henry Grace, now haggard and pinched with famine and covered with dirt. One would be slow now to see in that face indications of the iron resolution and reckless courage for which he was known among soldiers and prisoners. Jack Moran had also changed for the worse. Jed was terribly thin and haggard.

"I think," said Kentucky, who was visiting us, "my best chance to get out is to wait until I'm a little thinner and then crawl through the cracks of the stockade."

"Yes," drawled Grace, "and then you'll only

have to turn sideways to be invisible to the enemy."

At this the group of ragged starvelings laughed as other men laugh, for humor is the last sentiment that dies out of the hearts of brave men.

"Well," said Jed, "it isn't any use worrying about chances, for our chances can be no worse in trying to get out than in remaining here."

"That's bravely said," said Moran approvingly: "there isn't one chance in thirty for us to live here six months. There's over a hundred deaths each day in this 'hell's ten-acre lot.'"

"Ain't that rather a rough name for a Confederate boarding-house?" said Grace, with his old humor twinkling in his eyes at Moran's explosiveness.

I agreed heartily with Moran's views, and so did all of our party but Robinson, who, having a settled repugnance to experiments, only said, —

"You'll get yourselves killed, when, if you'd wait, you might be exchanged."

"Haven't we been in this place waiting since May?" said Jed, "and aren't half our boys dead already?"

"That's a clincher," drawled Grace approvingly.

It was finally agreed, and even Robinson assented, that we should unite in another effort to escape from the prison. As we had but one chance in ten for life in this horrible place, all felt that it was better to condense the chances against us in

one effort to avoid the doom which threatened the hopeless inmates of Andersonville.

Various places were talked over for the contemplated attempt. Moran thought a tunnel might be successfully dug from one of the sheds which had been lately erected in the "new stockade."

It was, as he argued, farthest from the gate, and consequently we could get warning if the quartermaster should make one of his prying visits. Again, the guard, being at a long distance from their officers, would be less watchful at this point than nearer. It was also near the woods. A plan outlined by Jed was finally adopted. He proposed digging a tunnel from an unfinished well at the northeast part of the stockade. This had all the advantages, and none of the hinderances, of the other plans.

The place was less thickly inhabited here, and the digging of the well gave us a plausible excuse for being seen there, and for disposing of the soil excavated from the tunnel under pretence of completing the well. It was a good plan, and was adopted.

"I go for pushing it through at once, for I need exercise to take down my fat," said Kentucky, who never could resist presenting the ludicrous side even of a serious subject.

"You are too full of nonsense," said Robinson reproachfully.

"Well, I feel that it's better to laugh than to

cry," said Kentucky, "and I am sure it pays better."

"I don't think it pays to do either," said Moran. "If a man's courage isn't good without whistling to keep it up, it's not good for much."

"I've noticed, though, that men with some fun in them have more earnestness and courage than the solemn ones when the nip comes," drawled Grace.

Everything favored our plan. There was great need of a well at this part of the stockade, as it was a long distance for weak men to walk either to "Providence Spring" or to the "Branch" for water. So Jed, Moran, Robinson, Grace, and myself all moved our belongings nearer to the well, and here not only set up housekeeping, but suddenly exhibited great enthusiasm at well-digging.

The tunnel was begun in the well at about breast height. Each night the soil removed from the tunnel was thrown into the well, to be removed next day under pretence of deepening the well.

The prisoners who had projected the well had a rope, which they loaned us for the purpose of drawing out soil in a wooden bucket, which was the product of Jed's ingenuity.

We dug in the tunnel only at night, during which time the well would be filled with the soil excavated from our tunnel. Before getting out of the well each morning, the entrance to the mouth of the tunnel was concealed.

We gradually added to the number interested in our project those whom we knew to be trustworthy, among others the men who owned the rope. There were only fifteen in the secret, as it was not best to trust too many with our plans. Each man was pledged to secrecy. The tunnel was large enough for a large man to crawl through on his hands and knees.

After we had been at work a week, Moran measured our work, and declared that the hole extended twenty feet beyond the stockade. All that was now needed was to open our tunnel.

About this time we pretended to be hopeless of ever reaching water, and began to throw the soil back into the well in pretended disgust. This answered the double purpose of concealing our work and of filling up the well, so as to bring the tunnel to a convenient height for easy access, and to direct attention from our real design while we waited for a dark night in which to make our exit.

At last a dark, rainy night came, and we began opening the tunnel by digging upward into the outer air at its farthest extremity. The tunnel ran under the palisade midway between two sentry-boxes.

Turner, who had charge of the bloodhounds at Andersonville, was in the habit of making a circuit around the outside of the stockade every night between eleven and twelve o'clock, and we waited to hear the dogs before "opening" our tunnel. We

had been digging for several nights on a gradually ascending plane, in order to make our exit easier, and were at this time within about five feet of the surface at its farther end outside the stockade. At a little after eleven o'clock the dogs were heard making their usual rounds.

We began our task, — ranged in the tunnel at convenient distances, on our hands and knees, — of passing the excavated soil to one another to be thrown into the well.

We worked vigorously and silently. It was very hot at any time at this work, and through excitement or some other cause it was at this time hotter than usual.

I was next to Moran, who was opening the tunnel, when I felt a draught of cool air, and saw before me a strange yellow glimmer of light. The tunnel had reached the outer air.

Suddenly the work ceased, and Moran came towards me whispering, —

"We are in a scrape. We have opened our hole just about ten feet beyond an outside picket-fire."

All went back to the well to consult upon this unexpected circumstance. Upon our return we brought back the rope into the tunnel, so that by each placing a hand upon it they could easily be signalled.

We also brought with us all our property which we intended to take. On this occasion I went

first, Jed followed with Grace, Moran and the others following us.

"New nerves for a new emergency; mine are all shaken up to-night, and I am not fit to lead," said Moran.

One look, as I stuck my head through the hole, gave me the situation. By standing up in the mouth, or opening, of our tunnel, I could easily step out. Fortunately for us, Moran had made no noise in making the opening. It seemed almost impossible to get out without being discovered, yet every moment was precious, and the hourly cry, "Twelve o'clock, and all's well," from Post 22 had just been called. In a short time the guard would be relieved, and the relief might stumble right into the hole we had just opened.

The guard was sitting on a log by his fire with his back toward us. While we were hesitating, the question was solved in an unexpected manner. A man approached the guard and proposed to him to visit his quarters and get a drink of "prime apple jack." As the guard at first hesitated, his friend urged, "It won't take more than fifteen minutes," and he consented.

He left his haversack and musket at the fire, and came so perilously near our opening that it seemed that he must stumble upon us.

After this I was in the very act of getting out of the tunnel when I heard a step, and in a moment the same guard returned. I saw him pick up his

"One look as I stuck my head through the hole gave me the situation." — Page 336.

cotton haversack, take from it a pipe, and, lighting it, sit down on the log. But soon, throwing a few sticks on his fire, he arose and disappeared in the darkness. The cold sweat of suspense stood all over me, and my nerves were in a tremor when I pulled the rope for the others to advance as I got out of the tunnel. In a short time we had all crept on hands and knees into the sheltering woods near at hand.

Grace had, however, stopped long enough to possess himself of the musket and haversack belonging to the guard.

It had previously been arranged that we should make three parties of five each, and that each party should pursue its plans of escape independent of the other.

Our party consisted of Jed, Moran, Grace, Robinson, and myself.

We silently separated from Kentucky and other comrades, and, facing eastward, began our journey through the dark woods, in the desperate effort to reach our lines.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TO THE RIVER.

OUR plan was to reach the Flint River, which flows southward towards the Gulf, ten miles from Andersonville. There we hoped to find either a boat or the materials for constructing a raft, and to elude the dogs by going down the river.

Our party possessed a small pocket compass and a map of the county, with scale of miles, obtained by tracing from a map owned by a comrade in prison. We also had two knives similar to those used by sailors, and then used by our troops as eating-knives. We had with us the well-rope, besides the rebel musket and haversack which Grace had taken.

I had serious misgivings about the effects of this act, but Grace argued that as the guard had lost his musket by deserting his post, he would be likely to falsify in a way that would call attention from our escape, rather than to it. Besides, it was a positive good to possess these things, while it was impossible to foresee any evil that might result from their possession.

A previous experience in attempting to escape had taught me that when travelling in the woods, with no paths or points in the landscape for guid-

ance, one would be more likely to move in a curved than in a direct line. So our first care, after leaving the prison, was to take a direction east, and keep it.

As we could not direct our way by means of the compass because of darkness, we undertook to do this by getting range from point to point by means of trees. But even with these precautions we did not keep our course, and when daylight came we found ourselves travelling towards the north. We at once changed our directions to east, and hurried on towards the river, which we hoped to reach before the dogs were put on our track.

We passed through several immense cornfields, where we gathered ears of corn, and no one who has not had a similar experience of hunger can imagine how ravenously we ate it, or how refreshed we were by this food.

At daybreak it stopped raining, and the sun came up glowing and hot. We had been very thirsty for some time, and had no other thought, when we came to a little stream in the woods, than to satisfy our thirst. It was not until we had drank that it occurred to us that following the stream would lead us to the river, and at the same time throw the dogs off our track, should they follow us.

We got into the stream and walked in Indian file, with the water up to our knees, and had thus journeyed for an hour, sometimes miring to our waists, sometimes encountering interlacing, thorny

vines across the creek, making it almost impassable, when we came into swampy land. A deep fringe of underbrush, taller than our heads, on either side, gave us a refreshing shade.

Our advance was, however, here so difficult that we debated retracing our steps, when Jed, who was very quick of hearing, declared that the dogs were on our track. We listened, and soon heard the distant yelping of the hounds. They had struck our track on the road near where we had taken to the water. We debated the situation in whispers, knowing they would be likely to follow on the banks of the stream to regain our track. The result of the debate was that we resolved to follow the stream until we were obliged to abandon it.

Upon hearing the dogs, Grace loaded his musket, saying, "They won't get me without getting some of this."

The swamp had the advantage to us that it was impassable to our mounted pursuers, and that they could not get through its bogs to flank us.

We finally came to firmer ground, — an indication that we were getting out of the swamp. I was in favor of going back into the heart of the swamp again, when to the left of us we heard the yelping of dogs and the shouts of the men.

"They are trying to frighten us into showing ourselves, or into making some noise, so as to find out where we are," said Moran. We were uncertain what course to pursue, but finally, as there was

then no means of their finding our track, we concluded to continue on our course. We had kept on some fifteen minutes in painful silence, making as little noise as possible, when right before us we again heard the dogs and men.

"They have gone around the swamp to see if they can strike our track from below," said Grace, "and I think we had better stay right where we are for a while."

There was a big tree just below us in the swamp. I suggested that by means of an overhanging branch one of us might get into the tree, perhaps see what was before us, or possibly discover what our pursuers were doing.

Jed mounted on Moran's shoulders, grasped the tip of the limbs, and soon clambered into the tree. He reported that the swamp extended apparently a quarter of a mile ahead of us, and beyond that there appeared to be cleared land. Our pursuers were, perhaps, on a road running beyond the swamp.

It was thought best to continue our advance. This soon became very difficult, as rotten logs, briers, and a miry bottom impeded our progress at every step. We clung to the small twigs at the sides to keep from miring, cutting away the briers with our knives as we advanced. We soon came to firmer footing, and for half an hour did not hear a sound from our pursuers.

Still wading in the stream, we found a road with a low, narrow bridge of logs crossing the stream.

In order to remain concealed, and still keep to the water, so as to give the bloodhounds no clew, we were obliged to creep under the bridge on our hands and knees.

Beyond this there was a continuation of the swamp for quite a distance, and then, on both sides of the brook, a large cornfield. We had no sooner come out to this cornfield than we again heard the barking of dogs, the blowing of horns, and the shouting of men.

The creek here had a hard, sandy bottom, and we made good speed until we reached a point where the stream was broader and was once more skirted by a tall fringe of undergrowth. The creek grew broader and deeper until we could no longer continue our course, except by keeping to one side of it, where, by the assistance of the underbrush, we could advance quite rapidly.

All this time we could occasionally hear the men and dogs. Suddenly Moran stopped, and, seizing my arm, said, —

"Hush! do you not hear them splashing in the water ahead of us? They are following up the course of this creek."

We were for an instant pretty badly frightened. Grace, who had been examining the priming of his musket, here coolly said, —

"There's a swampy place back of us, where they can't get in with their mules or horses; let us go

back and stay there, and fight them if they try to capture us."

This seemed so good a plan that we immediately adopted it. Here there was a heavy growth of brush and vines to shield us from sight. We carefully cut away with our knives the brush on one side, and sat down in the nook thus made, so that any one in the stream below could not see us. Here we waited in great suspense hearing the men and dogs at times splashing in the water.

At another time we plainly heard the tramp of their mules or horses, as they passed around the swampy place where we were concealed. Finally we heard one of them say, —

"They've got beyond this place, you can see that by the broken twigs."

Here we remained, however, some two hours without hearing any further sounds to indicate the presence of men and dogs. We had apparently outwitted and baffled them.

I had almost fallen asleep when I was aroused by Moran, who said, referring to the hunters, —

"I guess they have given up trying to find us by this time, and we must reach the river as soon as we can."

Once more we began our journey through the little stream, and soon came out upon cleared land where there was no fringe of small trees to shelter us from sight.

The creek continually broadened, and soon began

to run almost due south, while its banks rose to the height of our heads. For some distance we walked on its banks until we came to a field of either sorghum or sugar-cane. As we passed through it we heard the voices of a party of negro laborers only a short distance from us.

We overheard one of them saying, "Dey's all up to massa's, drinking whiskey, and makin' a powerful talk 'case dey carnt find dem Yankees."

We had little doubt but that "dem Yankees" referred to us.

Reaching wooded portions of the country, after two or three miles of travel, we were gladdened by the sight of the Flint River. We agreed that if we were pursued to this point, we would take to the river, even if we had to swim.

Our first care was to search for a boat, or for some means of constructing a raft. This search was for some time fruitless, but at last Jed found a log and two or three slabs.

It was too late to construct a raft before night; and fearful lest the dogs might yet come on our track, we waded up to our waists along the edge of the river, towing the logs and slabs with us up stream, for we believed that any one pursuing us would naturally follow the river banks down rather than up the stream.

We must have walked a mile in this manner when we came to a pine-wood, where we camped during the night, one of us keeping watch while

the rest slept. During the night no sound but the murmur of the river or the shrill piping of crickets could be heard.

Upon awaking we made a meal of green corn, with a little bacon and corn cake which we found in the rebel's haversack.

In the confiscated bag there were also a horn of powder, some bullets and percussion caps, and a flint and steel for kindling fires.

We now started out to find more material for our raft. Moran discovered several men crossing the river in a boat, and although he could plainly hear their voices could not distinguish what they were saying, or determine whether they were in pursuit of us. He proposed, after the party had landed, to swim across the river and bring back the boat, thus gaining both the means of going down the river and of preventing pursuit. The rest of us thought it doubtful if these were the Andersonville hunters; and if they were not, the stealing of their boat would give them a strong motive to pursue us. Moran was, however, so determined that we finally consented to his plan. After swimming the river he could not find the boat, which had been concealed, but he declared that he had seen an alligator big enough to swallow him.

Grace poked fun at him, by suggesting that possibly the alligator had swallowed the boat. Grace and Jed were more successful in their search,

and had found three large pine logs lodged with other driftwood in a bend of the river, — probably brought to this point by the spring freshets from some saw-mill up the stream.

With the aid of our rope we towed the logs to a convenient point, and bringing up the other log lashed them together, fastening them to the slabs by means of withes, in such a manner as to make a raft about eight feet wide. Moran whittled one of the smaller slabs into a rude paddle to steer with. We were very much relieved when at last the raft was finished, and covered with limbs of pine-trees securely lashed, and the whole strewn with a layer of pine needles to make it dry and comfortable. It was late in the afternoon when we pushed out into the stream and began a voyage the end of which we hoped might bring us once more under the old flag.

CHAPTER XXX.

DOWN THE RIVER.

WE floated down the river all night. Moran would not intrust the steering of our raft to any one but himself, and, grim and watchful, he sat silently at the helm.

Our situation was so novel, and our relief and joy so great, now that we were beyond pursuit of the Andersonville dogs, that we slept but little that night.

The next morning it began raining, so we drew our raft into a little creek, well sheltered from observation, on the east side of the river.

We made a meagre breakfast from the food still remaining in our haversack, and then, leaving Robinson and Moran to guard the raft, the rest of us started out to obtain, if possible, some food. We carried the compass with us, as without it there was danger of our being unable to find the raft again.

"If we could only strike a smoke-house, and get some ham or bacon!" drawled Grace.

"Yes," said Jed, "but we should probably 'strike' some dogs and men at the same time, and that might not be so pleasant."

We made our way through the pine woods for

some distance, when we encountered a swamp of tall reeds, among which briers were so completely interwoven as to prevent our further advance. We were compelled to go around it, and soon came out into cultivated land, where there was an immense cornfield, in every alternate row of which were planted pease, which grew luxuriantly.

Here we gathered all the corn we could conveniently carry, and on our return each cut an armful of the tall reeds, thinking that when dried they might be useful to spread on our raft. On reaching the raft, as there did not appear to be much danger of our being discovered, we pushed once more into the stream, and floated with the current.

Night came once more, and, though wet and chilled, we continued our voyage. The dark forests and bluffs on either side the river shut us in like a wall, through which the river made its way, reflecting the sky above like a path of light. The silence was meanwhile unbroken, except by the rippling of the water, the monotonous piping of the crickets, or the occasional hooting of an owl.

We were exultant at the thought that we had left the dreadful prison far behind, and were on our way to freedom. No incident of importance happened during the night, and as the light of a pleasant morning came we drew our raft into a place where it was well concealed, and, having appointed Jed to watch, we laid ourselves down to sleep. Jed, however, soon awakened us, making at the

same time a signal for silence. He had heard voices and the yelping of a dog, and, creeping to the top of the river bank, had seen a party of men and boys passing near us along a cart road. It was apparently a hunting party, but as they were not mounted they evidently were not searching for us.

Fearing, however, that if this party were to return, some accident might lead to our discovery, we moved our raft to the edge of a swamp which bordered the stream, about half a mile below the bluff-land, where we had halted. The sun was very hot, and this compelled us to drop down stream once more, that we might be protected by the shade of trees.

Thus we floated by night, and foraged and slept during the day.

It was about a week after this that we had tied our raft to a tree in a sheltered bend of the river, near where a large quantity of driftwood had lodged. Two of our party had gone in search of food, while Jed, Robinson, and myself had remained to strengthen the raft, which each day needed some repairs.

Jed, who had gone out to cut withes for this purpose, returned in a short time, exclaiming, "I've found a boat!"

"Where?" we asked in chorus.

"Bottom side up, among the jam of driftwood at the bend of the river below us."

We were a little incredulous at first, thinking

he had been deceived, but, accompanying him, found a light, flat-bottomed scow boat, as he had described. We removed our clothing, and, wading into the water, succeeded after much labor in dislodging it from the *débris* of logs and limbs. It proved to be about twelve or thirteen feet long, square at both ends, but rounded up from the bottom fore and aft. Its sides were made of single boards, with deck boards covering the stern and bows.

To say that we were much elated would but feebly describe our excitement; for, though we had seen boats on our route, we had been kept from taking them by the fear of leaving traces of our presence on the river. In one instance only had we meddled with them, and that when Moran had taken an extra paddle from one.

Upon the return of Grace and Moran we pulled the boat up, and got the water out of her. She was built of cypress boards about half an inch in thickness, strengthened by knees of cypress inside. She was unpainted, but her seams had originally been calked, and covered with pitch.

We launched her into the water to test her carrying powers, and were much chagrined to find that she leaked so badly that we should be compelled either to abandon her, or to spend much time in making repairs. It was quickly decided to do the latter. Moran and Grace, who had thoroughly scoured the country for miles around us, declared that we were

"Thus we floated by night, and foraged and slept during the day." — Page 349.

at least three miles from either habitations or roads; and, as there was a cypress swamp on the other side of the river opposite our landing-place, it was pronounced an unusually safe place in which to linger.

It was therefore arranged that Jed and Grace should act as scouts and foragers, while Moran, Robinson, and myself mended the boat.

The next morning we began the work. Our first procedure was to wash the boat thoroughly, inside and out, and to remove the old pitch and cotton still adhering to its seams. We cut off a piece of our precious rope and picked it into fine pieces for the purpose of calking.

The next day we allowed our craft to dry in the sun, while we gathered a large quantity of pitch from the surrounding pine-trees.

Up to this time since we had left the prison, we had neither built a fire nor discharged a gun. It now became necessary for us to do both, as through want of skill or knowledge we had been unable to get a fire by means of flint and steel.

To do this we first removed the charge from our musket, and replaced it with a charge of powder, with some of the dry oakum or rope for wadding; then, sprinkling still more of it with powder, we discharged the gun with its muzzle near this preparation, and soon had the first fire that we had seen since leaving the prison.

The little cove where we had pulled up our boat was admirably adapted both for concealment

and for work. There was a little grassy spot a dozen rods square in front of it, well shaded by the arching limbs of trees, and gradually sloping to the river. Jed and Grace had meanwhile seen neither plantation, houses, nor people, in a scout of five miles around us, though they had seen pigs running wild in the woods. It was agreed that they should risk the effect of firing the musket in order to kill one of these pigs for food.

Robinson, who proved very ingenious, had whittled a piece of hard wood into a wedge to be used for driving the oakum into the seams of the boat. I melted the pitch in a half-canteen which had been used by us for cooking in prison. I first, however, fastened a split stick to the canteen for a handle, and pinched one part of the edge so as to form a nozzle or spout, for pouring the pitch more directly into the seams. Our work progressed slowly, and after working an entire day at calking and pitching we had not half finished the work.

Our foragers came in that afternoon with a large supply of turpentine for the boat, but without provisions. They had seen but one pig, which, in their attempt to capture without shooting, had escaped them. They had, moreover, seen no signs of houses or cultivated fields, and were, like ourselves, tired and hungry.

We had now cooked all of our green corn, and nearly all of our sweet potatoes. Early the next

morning we vigorously resumed our work, which we nearly finished that day.

It was late in the afternoon when our scouts came in, bringing a young pig which they had killed and dressed ready to cut up. We had that night, it is needless to say, a hearty meal of the first animal food we had tasted for months.

The next day we all went to work on the boat, and before noon had finished our task, and upon launching it were delighted to find that it did not leak.

We now had a very good outfit for our voyage. There were two paddles, two strong poles (to one of which Moran proposed to fit our blanket for a sail), and the articles hitherto mentioned.

We cooked pork enough to last us several days, thinking it would keep better in that way. We had tried to cure some of it by smoking, but though we made a great smoke we did not succeed in curing anything but ourselves, of a desire for further experiment.

Once more we began our voyage, and floated all night with the stream, which we trusted might prove our highway to freedom. Moran estimated that we had come sixty or a hundred miles since we first started down the river. In less than a week, therefore, we expected to arrive at the point where the river unites with the Chattahoochee and forms the Appalachicola.

The next morning we landed, and our whole

party, with the exception of Moran (whom we left in charge of the boat), started out to procure more food. We got nearly a mile away from our landing, before we discovered that we had left our compass behind us. The night previous Moran had used it, and we had forgotten to bring it. Experience had taught us how easy it was to get lost, and so we started back for the compass. We travelled for upwards of an hour, when we found that we had lost our way in the pine woods. We finally came out near a large house, with its negro quarters. If we had lost our way, we had at least found a plantation.

Fearing to be discovered by its people we went back to a piece of timber on some elevated land, where Jed, being the keenest of sight, climbed a tree to discover the direction of the river. Although he could not see the river, yet he believed by certain indications that he had discovered the direction in which it lay. We concluded to fill our haversacks with green corn, a field of which was near at hand, and to hurry back to our landing-place. While thus engaged we heard voices, and before we had time for concealing ourselves, encountered a party of black laborers going to their work. Making a virtue of the encounter, I asked them to give us something to eat. They gave us a few Indian cakes which they called "pones," in return for which Grace offered them his knife, but it was refused.

"No," said an old negro, "God bless yer, massa! We knows ye are Yanks by yer cloes. We was up at Anderson working on the stockade, and see some of you'ns there. I knows the Yanks, I does."

"You must not let any one know you have seen us," said I, "as we are escaping from prison."

"If you will go up into them woods we'll bring you some sweet potatoes and hoe-cake," said the black man.

This we agreed to, but we kept a good lookout to see that they did not betray us, for hard treatment at Andersonville had taught us to distrust every one. In a few minutes they came back, bringing half a smoked ham, some Indian cakes, and nearly half a bushel of potatoes.

They informed us that the only white people on the plantation were women, and one old man. They were very anxious to know our opinion of how the war was going to end, and if the Yankees conquered the rebels what they would do with the colored people.

I explained the emancipation proclamation to them, and told them that our government had pledged itself to give all the slaves their freedom. That this was not entirely new to them was evident, for the old negro uncovered his head, and, reverently lifting his eyes to heaven, said, "I'se believe de Lord will lead our people out 'er bondage to de promised land."

He told us we were in Decatur County, about

twenty miles from Bainbridge, which was "a right smart town, on a bluff at the east side of the river." He pointed out our way to the river, which we soon reached, but had so much difficulty in finding the boat that we resolved not to leave it again, for any but short distances, without our compass.

At early twilight we resumed our voyage, and by aid of the sail and a fair wind passed through the bluff-land, around Bainbridge, before daylight the next morning. Two days after, without accident, we reached the Appalachicola River.

The Chattahoochee, uniting with the Flint River, here forms the Appalachicola, which is swift and broad.

It was now about the 1st of September. The health of the party was very good, and we borrowed no trouble for the future, for, as Grace philosophically remarked, we were likely to have an ample supply without borrowing before we reached our lines, — a prophecy which was fulfilled sooner than we anticipated.

That morning we had brought our little craft into a bend of the river where we were but partially sheltered from sight; and in addition to this we soon found we were at a sort of ferry, where people were constantly passing from shore to shore in boats. It therefore seemed equally dangerous for us to remain where we were, or to change our position until night.

Early in the morning a party of men and boys

had crossed to the opposite shore from a point near our landing; and another party, consisting of two men and three women, landed within fifty feet of us.

"It won't do to stay here," said Moran decidedly, while his square jaw worked in suppressed excitement. "I saw one of the men look in this direction, and ten chances to one he saw us." But while this was likely, it did not appear equally evident that he had recognized us as escaped Yankee prisoners.

After a moment's reflection, Moran started towards the strange boat, saying, "I am going to take the oars from their boat, so when they return they can't follow us." While Jed expressed his opinion that this was bad policy, the other members of our party, except Robinson, sided with Moran.

In addition to the oars he found two fishing-lines, with hooks and sinkers. I agreed with Moran that if the oars were taken, it was just as well to also take these fish-lines, as they might prove of great value to us; but Jed did not believe it right or politic to provoke antagonism by an unprovoked, if not a dishonest, act.

We had taken the things from the strange boat, and were all ready to embark on our own, when some one sharply said, "Whar ar yer going, stranger, with my fixin's?"

We turned, and on the bank above us stood a man dressed in a well-worn butternut suit, coolly

sighting along the barrel of a rifle, which was aimed at us.

Moran, with more presence of mind than some of us, replied, "We are going to visit some friends up the river a ways, and have borrowed your paddles. We will bring 'em back all right soon."

"Take them fixin's back to my boat, stranger," said the butternut contestant, with an ominous and rising inflection of voice.

His tones and manner were more emphatic of anger and determination than his words, and we were about to obey him when the crack of a rifle from my rear rang out, while our enemy gave a yell of pain, dropped his musket, and rushed into the woods. Grace, who was the only one in the boat at the time we were challenged, seeing that a crisis in our affairs had arrived, with inconceivable quickness had seized and fired the musket. Moran meanwhile rushed after the retreating rebel, crying, "Stop him! He'll raise the country if we don't."

The rest of us, who had been dazed by this incident, quickly followed him; but Grace, being very swift of foot, soon caught up with the citizen, whereupon the latter, finding it impossible to outrun him, clutched with Grace, and a hand-to-hand struggle took place. Grace had his antagonist on the under side when we came up.

"We don't want to hurt you," said Moran.

"Look a yer," said the stranger, holding up a

bleeding hand and arm, as if that was a sufficient contradiction of Moran's pacific statement.

Upon examination, after he had yielded himself a prisoner, we found that Grace's bullet had penetrated his right hand, passed out and shattered the arm near the elbow, and it was this wound which had caused him to drop his musket so suddenly.

We were in great perplexity to determine what to do with our captive, and could spare but little time to debate the question, as his companions were liable to return at any moment.

"The best way would be to kill him," said Moran, chewing at his quid of tobacco grimly.

If there is anything which will dissipate anger or evil intent against an enemy, it is to see him wounded and helpless in your hands. We could not injure this disarmed man who had so lately been threatening us, and on whose disposal perhaps even now our safety, if not our lives, depended. Grace proposed to take him into the boat with us and set him ashore at some point below, where it would be safe to let him loose.

Jed, who had had some experience in dressing wounds, had already begun to cut away his sleeve and to dress the wound, which was bleeding profusely. We finally tied his legs together, and the uninjured arm to his side, and left him in the path to the river, near his boat. We then took his ammunition and rifle, and, pushing his boat adrift in the stream, embarked in our own

boat, and paddled rapidly to the opposite side of the river.

I had forgotten to say that the wounded man had promised us that if we would not put a gag in his mouth he would not call out; but we had scarcely reached the opposite shore when he began to yell at the top of his voice.

A moment later we heard a commotion on the shore we had left, and saw two men running along the bank, and in a short time a boat put out from the shore, paddled apparently by the same two men. We worked with all our might to keep out of gun-shot range of them. For some reason, notwithstanding they had but two men against our four at the paddles, they began to gain on us in the chase.

Moran, however, observing that a good breeze had sprung up in the direction we were going, set our sail and steered; while Robinson and I worked at the paddles, Jed and Grace loaded the muskets for a possible fight.

Moran and Grace were for stopping to fight our pursuers, but more temperate counsel prevailed. In a short time our boat began gaining on our pursuers, who, seeing this, put back to the shore, while we continued our voyage. We had misgivings that the country around us might be aroused, for it was broad daylight, and we were likely to have other encounters on the river. We had no choice, however, except to make all speed possible,

as the people on the river below were liable to be aroused to hunt and capture us.

We were so fortunate as not to be molested during the day, though we passed near a small sailing craft in the afternoon. We sailed and paddled all the following night, but did not cover as long a distance as we ordinarily had done, as we had now reached the tide waters of the Appalachicola, which set against us part of the time. We estimated the distance made when morning dawned, as thirty miles.

As daylight came on we brought our boat into a heavily wooded portion of the shore, where we determined to wait and rest during the day.

On nearing the river coast we found ourselves on the borders of a dense cypress swamp which apparently extended for miles below and a long distance above us.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A NEST IN THE CYPRESS.

WE slowly paddled along the borders of the swamp, looking for a firm landing-place, but for a time the ground was too boggy and uncertain to make this practicable. As it became lighter, however, we made our way into a sort of bayou which cleft the swamp, and seemingly ran almost parallel with the river, which, by following a short distance, brought us finally to a good landing.

This landing proved to be a large hummock forming a small island in the swamp, from which grew several trees of the oak species. From this island or hummock, and also from the smaller hassocks of the swamp, on its sides, there clambered a wilderness of luxuriant vines into the interlinked and spreading cypress limbs above.

These trees, for even fifteen or twenty feet from the ground upward, were bare of limbs, and then spread out in a dense mass, through which the vines were interwoven.

After exploring among the cypress-trees, which were surrounded with water to the depth of several feet, we landed on the island. Here we ate a hearty breakfast from our almost exhausted stock of pro-

visions, and, having pulled up our boat, lay down to sleep, for we were very tired.

It was nearly noon when I was awakened by a horrified cry from one of our party, which brought us to our feet. The cause of the alarm proved to be the approach of several alligators, now clumsily making their way back into the current of the bayou, leaving behind them an unpleasant odor not unlike musk. Though we had seen a number of these repulsive reptiles since we had begun our voyage, we had not before met them as neighbors.

This incident led us to explore still farther the interior of the swamp, in our boat, in hopes to find a retreat more secure against these intruders, and safer from any search which might possibly be made for us. We paddled our way among the cypress-trees whose branches overspread our heads, and whose massive trunks formed, as it were, pillars to the interwoven canopy of branches and vines above us.

We had advanced several hundred feet, when our boat could go no farther on account of huge cypress knees and roots; while just beyond large vines grew from the hassocks, of still greater size and profusion, so as completely to shut out the sight of the sky. Moran, with a sailor's instinct, climbed up one of the smaller of the straight cypress-trees to obtain an outlook. To do this he was obliged to use his knife to cut away the vines when he reached the cypress limbs, so as to admit his body.

An exclamation of wonder escaped him when he had reached the top. He explained to us below that the vines and limbs together had formed a thick, level mass, and from his outlook he could see what appeared to be cultivated lands. This excited our curiosity so much that all of us but Robinson climbed to the tops of the trees to take a look for ourselves.

We found, as Moran had said, a wonderful mass of vines interwoven with the branches in such a manner that they supported the weight of our bodies, and enabled us with little difficulty to pass from the top of one tree to that of another by their aid.

As we were about to descend to the ground, Jed, who had been climbing from tree to tree, called out to us that he had found a place so densely plaited that he believed we could live on the tops of the trees. When we came to the spot we found it indeed a wonderful plateau of branches and vines, so level and compact that we could almost walk on it. Moran looked the place over critically, and said, —

"We are in search of a hiding-place, and we have found it. Let us make this place still more level and strong, and sleep and hide here until the chance of our being waylaid on the river is over."

We all agreed to this proposition, and began at once the task. We interwove still more closely

the vines with the limbs of the cypress, cut them away in places, and laid others from the crotch of the cypress-trees in such a way as to make it quite safe. The next day we resumed our work, and continued it from day to day, until we had about ten feet square very strong and level. This we enclosed with a rude but strong railing of vines and cypress limbs, and also covered the plateau with a thick bed of Spanish moss gathered from the trees, where it hung in heavy festoons. On one side of this plateau, where a few limbs of a tall cypress projected above the surrounding level, we built a shelter from the sun with vines, covered it with moss, using the branches of the trees for framework.

We had now a secure retreat, where we could sleep, and where it would be difficult for an enemy to come at us, even had they known of our presence there. We then fastened our rope to the top of the plateau, and with some of the longest vines made a ladder for easy ascent, and which might also be drawn up after us when we had reached the top.

We now needed only some sure means of subsistence to make this a safe dwelling-place as long as we chose to remain. To make access to our habitation more complete, we built a platform around the roots of a huge cypress near this as a landing-place for our boat. This was easy of construction, as the cypress mounds and roots gave a foundation

on which to lash limbs. These we fastened with small vines made pliable by beating, until they were an excellent substitute for ropes. From this wharf we constructed a passage-way for about twenty feet over the slippery cypress knees and roots to our ladder. This work was done from time to time, and occupied several days.

With the exception of about two pounds of ham, mostly fat, and a few potatoes, our provisions were now exhausted, and hunger demanded a speedy supply.

Early next morning we went up stream with our boat, to forage for food. We did not find a plantation, as we had been led to think we should by seeing, from our nest, indications of cleared land near at hand. Baffled in this, we returned and paddled up the main stream, but finding nothing but swamps for nearly two miles, came back, much discouraged and very hungry, to the oak hummock or island, where we had made our first landing, and where we intended to do our cooking. On returning we had at first missed the bayou, and this delayed us till nearly noon. Jed began to dig on the hassock for worms, and finally succeeded in finding some for bait, though not the kind we call angle-worms. We tried fishing in the bayou, but did not catch anything; and finally cast our lines in the river near the mouth of the bayou. Here we caught a fish about fifteen inches in length, with white belly, steel gray back, and lines of rosy

brown on the sides, which Moran said was a mullet; also several smaller ones like perch. We now returned to the island to cook our fish. We kindled a blaze by firing our gun into some dry leaves and oakum sprinkled with powder, and soon had a good fire; we then fried our fish in our half-canteen. Hunger is the best of sauces, and the fish seemed the most delicious of anything we ever ate. Replenishing the fire with boughs, to prevent its going out, we returned to the nest.

On ascending to our retreat in the cypress, Moran ascertained by aid of our pocket compass that the bayou, instead of running nearly parallel with the river, as we had supposed, enclosed a triangular-shaped peninsula, on the opposite side of which were the cultivated fields to be seen from our nest, and which we had tried to reach. These fields were apparently surrounded with swamps, and were not, as far as we could discern, approachable from the river.

The next day, Jed and Grace, after landing us on a hummock on the river, went in search of food with the boat. It was late when they returned with the haversack and the lining of Jed's jacket filled with sweet potatoes and a few ears of hard and rather poor corn. They had obtained this supply at a plantation on the opposite side of the river two miles above us, but were of the opinion that it would not be safe to return there, as they had been seen by the negroes, and after reach-

ing the boat, had heard hounds yelping as if in pursuit. That night we cooked an appetizing meal, on the hummock, which we used as a kitchen, and were well pleased, as a whole, with our day's adventures.

A few days after this, while Grace was exploring among the vine-matted cypress limbs, he discovered beneath him a ridge of hassock land running towards the clearing which we had believed to be a plantation. He thought we might be able, as he said, to "open up communication with its sweet potatoes," and thus obtain a sure supply of food.

Armed with our two muskets, which we kept with our blankets at our nest, we advanced some hundreds of yards on the vine-covered plateau, until below us was the line of hassocks or oak hummocks which Jed had described.

The hassocks were mostly firm and dry. The briers and vines were the worst impediment to our advance, as they were so thick and tangled that we were obliged to cut our way through them with our knives.

A few hundred yards advance, with only occasional swampy bottom, brought us out of the swamp to firmer ground, whence we easily reached the cleared land. At one point we had found it convenient to turn over from our path, by a device of Moran's, a tangled mass of vines, which could be dropped into place again, if desirable, and

thus shut off the path. We found corn, though it was not very good for roasting, and plenty of sweet potatoes. This was, fortunately, at a part of the plantation remote from its buildings, and where we were in no great danger of being discovered. We were careful not to disturb the vines when digging the potatoes, and broke down but a few roasting ears in any one place. In returning we had replaced the barricade of tangled vines in its place in our path, and on ascending to the plateau on the tree tops, pulled up the vines by which we had ascended, having first cut them from the roots. We also took the precaution of cutting away all similar vines, so that, if we were ever pursued, there would be no means of following us, or clew to our escape, after we had reached the plateau. We now viewed our position with much satisfaction. If we had had wings we could not have more effectually shut off all means of pursuit.

During all this time we usually kept our boat at the little platform at the foot of the cypress, and in it went back and forth to cook our food, and eat it on the island, where, since we first kindled our fire, we had not allowed it to go out.

We passed our time in perfecting our nest in the cypress; also in fishing, and exploring the swamp for wild limes and oranges. The alligators which were seen in the bayous were, unless stirred up too familiarly, more repulsive than dangerous,

and we became accustomed to their occasional presence. We soon had a good stock of food, consisting of yams, potatoes, and fish, and a few wild limes and sour oranges, which were sometimes found on the hummocks.

For three weeks we passed our time in happy content. Robinson, who seldom went on excursions with us, thatched the roof, made for shade, so that it became a protection against rain; made a comfortable bed of moss, also seats and a rude table of woven vines, where we often ate our food.

We should have been contented to remain here for months had not an event occurred which disturbed our tranquillity and safety. While Jed and Grace were prospecting on the plantation, armed with the guns, they fired at a pig which had wandered into the cypress swamp. The pig was wounded, and ran squealing, with our boys in close pursuit, in the direction of the plantation. They were so eager in the chase that, as Grace tersely said, they did not notice that they had gone too far from their base before they ran into a white man, who, while seemingly friendly, had followed and questioned them as to where they belonged. Grace, according to Jed's account, had put a stop to his interrogation by a significant motion with his musket, and by saying in his drawling tones, —

"I say, old man, if you don't go home right off, yer folks'll get lonesome."

Upon hearing this incident we all agreed that it

would thereafter be uncomfortable if not dangerous to draw further rations from the potato ridges and cornfields of that plantation.

"They can't find us here, nor get at us if they do," said Moran, "but they will make us uncomfortable."

It was not two hours after, that we heard the baying of the bloodhounds outside the swamp. They even came into the swamp for a considerable distance with the dogs, and then turned back, apparently baffled.

We had no fears that they could reach us, but, as our days of peace and contentment were at an end here, we agreed that it was time to resume our voyage down the river. We were, however, determined not to be hurried or driven. Moran suggested that we return in a body to the plantation once more to obtain potatoes and corn, in order to be well provisioned for the journey. The plan was opposed by Robinson, but was nevertheless adopted. They had apparently abandoned the search and pursuit for the day, and were possibly rallying their neighbors to hunt us on the morrow. We therefore concluded to make a strategic movement on their potato patch that afternoon. Armed with our muskets we boldly returned, gathered corn and dug potatoes, and were on our way home. Jed was carrying the haversack full of potatoes, while Moran and myself had a miscellaneous assortment of potatoes, corn, beans, and other vegetables

tied in a blanket, which we were carrying together. Suddenly I heard a sound which made my heart jump.

It was the deep bay of a bloodhound. On we dashed towards the swamp, while Jed and Grace with the muskets covered our retreat. We ran towards a triangle formed by a fence, which was one of our landmarks, but before scaling it we looked back; Jed and Grace were not in sight, and the sound of dogs meanwhile came nearer and nearer. Grasping once more our blanket of potatoes, we ran on, the dogs still following us.

A pack of dogs is usually made up of two or three formidable savage dogs, while the others are often fox dogs or any other keen-scented canines. Any dog will follow a man if trained to it. What were we to do?

"I'll fight, but I won't run any farther," said Moran, while his square, determined jaw came together almost with a snap, and he dropped his end of the blanket. The dogs were now close upon us, and two mounted men were at the fence following. They stopped to take it down. Just then the dogs broke upon us in full cry, and leading them was the largest Cuban bloodhound I ever saw. I turned to run.

"Stop!" said Moran, and, catching hold of the blanket of potatoes as the foremost dog came at him, hurled it at him with prodigous force. It struck the brute squarely, and turned him end over

end. The whole pack of dogs now slunk back. Once more we turned to run, but not without our potatoes. The mounted men catching sight of us at this instant, rode up yelling furiously.

We had now reached the edge of the swamp; meanwhile, the dogs and the mounted men were in such close pursuit that escape seemed impossible. Just at this instant a musket shot was heard from the swamp, and down went a rider and horse. The dogs were, however, upon us again. I grasped my hat from my head, and, muffling my hand, thrust it out for a dog to snap at. He jumped for my hand, when I struck full at his throat with my knife, and the blood spurted out in my face.

"Good!" said Moran, excitedly adopting the same tactics, but the dogs had now cowardly slunk away from further encounter.

A few steps more and we came to the barrier of briers, where we found the other members of our party. This barrier was passed and thrown back into the path, and we were soon secure in the cypress-trees with all our plunder. We heard our pursuers when they reached the barrier of briers and vines, and heard their dogs beyond it in the swamp, but we knew we were secure at least for a season.

That afternoon, after cooking a large quantity of food, we sorrowfully bade good-by to our nest in the cypress, and with everything belonging to our

party securely packed in our boat, resumed our voyage down the river.

Our boat was now well stocked with provisions; we had a large number of baked potatoes and about a bushel of raw ones, over thirty ears of corn, as well as a full half-bushel of peanuts, gathered that day.

A voyage of two nights brought us to what proved to be an island at the mouth of the river. During the trip we had not been able to make a landing, as cypress swamps extended on both sides of us. Here, however, we landed, as the island was high and sandy, and covered with pine woods, and seemingly uninhabited. During the two days and nights preceding, we had experienced some discomfort for want of water, but here found a good supply.

With the exception of Robinson, we were now all in vigorous health. The vegetable diet and wild limes and oranges had cured us of the scurvy, which afflicted us while prisoners, and we now felt strong in the resolution to bring our voyage to a successful termination.

A life of peril makes men brave, quick-witted, and inclined to make the best of adverse fortune. Discontent and worry, I have often thought since, come only to those who move in the calm of life, rather than in its troubled places. We borrowed no trouble, but were content with what trouble we had.

We remained here during the day, and then, desiring to come to the farther end of the island in order to get a better outlook for any of our blockading squadron, which Moran thought might be cruising in the bay, we resumed our voyage. Our map showed us that the west fork of the river would carry us perilously near the town of Appalachicola. We did not think it prudent to seek the acquaintance of its people, and therefore determined to go down the east fork of the river.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON THE APPALACHICOLA BAY.

IT was a moonlight night when, with a favoring breeze and an outgoing tide, we steered our craft down the east fork of the Appalachicola River. We were borne so rapidly towards the southern limit of the island that we had not prepared for landing before we were swept away by the tide and current, which here ran like a mill-race. Though we worked hard at the paddles, we could not resist the force that swept us on. Even Moran, accustomed to boats, exclaimed in dismay, "We are being carried out to sea!" So, breathless with hard work and excitement, one by one we dropped our paddles, and despondently watched the receding shore. "If we had a good supply of water it would not be so bad," said Moran.

This was a new cause for alarm, which the increasing roughness of the sea did not diminish.

Jed, who had remained silent and thoughtful during this time, here said, "We are in God's hands, who has delivered us out of many perils. It seems to me there is no cause for alarm. The map shows there are islands off the mouth of this river,

which in any case we shall have to reach, in order to be near incoming vessels, and it is as good a time for us to get there now as any."

"I didn't think of that," said Moran.

It was astonishing what a revulsion of feeling came with the uttering of these sensible words, and it illustrates how the faith and hopeful courage of one man will sometimes inspire his comrades in trials. The sail was soon set, the points of the compass ascertained, and the paddles resumed.

The height of the waves had at first alarmed us; but as Moran declared there was no danger, and that the boat was of a build not easily upset or swamped, we soon ceased to fear.

Several hours of paddling, sailing, and drifting succeeded, until we could see no land on either side of us. To add to our uncertainty, the moon went down behind a western cloud, and we could no longer steer by the points of the compass. A heavy, chopping sea, meanwhile, made it impossible to paddle to any practical purpose. The wind still remained in our favor, though the tide set against us, and produced the rough sea in which the boat was laboring, and which kept us uncomfortably wet.

When daylight came we had passed beyond this sea, and saw before us a long stretch of low land, about two miles away. We now took down our sail, for fear it might attract attention, and by paddling soon got out of the tide.

We found the shore low, and, coasting along for a favorable landing, came at last to a little creek. Here we landed, and, while one of our party was left in charge of the boat, the others went in search of fresh water, and also to see what kind of a country we had landed in. The water was very clear and inviting, and on our return from prospecting we refreshed ourselves with a bath.

At one place, where there was a mass of the shell rock peculiar to this coast, we discovered some oysters, and gathered a large number, from which we made a luxurious breakfast. We found them also in clumps of a dozen or so on the clay bottom.

We now pulled up our boat, and, the sun being quite hot, turned it three-quarters over and propped it up for a shelter. We took the precaution, however, to stick up bushes around the boat, for the double purpose of concealment and of protection from the sun. As we were very tired with our night of excitement and labor, we now went to sleep under the shade of the boat.

The name of the country we had landed in was unknown to us, though we believed we were on one of the several islands which here form a breakwater or harbor at the mouth of the Appalachicola River.

Upon awaking from our slumbers, we started out once more on a voyage of discovery. Taking a southerly direction we travelled about a mile,

which brought us to the open Gulf, where a low surf was rolling in upon the shore, and where before us the sea extended as far as the eye could reach.

As Moran gazed on this sea, he said, "Here is where we ought to be with our boat. Our blockading squadron has vessels cruising along this coast, and any sail may prove a friendly one."

We found the land mostly wooded with pine of good growth, and, in returning, came in sight of a cultivated field of corn, which we, however, did not think it prudent to disturb at that time.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that as the tide began to ebb at about seven o'clock in the evening, and as the nights were moonlit, it would be a good plan to make use of these advantages to reach the gulf or ocean side of this cape or island where we had landed. So, after a hearty supper of delicious oysters, we once more launched our little craft. The wind, as it came from the northeast, was not very favorable for our voyage, but, by paddling along the shore, we had made satisfactory progress when daybreak came. As we were not very tired, after a good nap we for an anchor tied a piece of shell rock to our rope which we used as a cable, and began fishing. We caught several Spanish mackerel and also a mullet, which proved to be delicious eating.

To make a fire we were obliged once more to discharge our gun, and, needing fuel, collected it

from a wooded knoll near by. We soon had a hearty meal of fish, oysters, and baked sweet potatoes.

After this there crept over us such a sense of contentment that we agreed to remain here for several days, keep our fire going, and eat, sleep, and rest.

In furtherance of this purpose we revisited the wooded knoll for dry limbs, when we encountered a man who had apparently been watching us.

"Heard a gun, and thought I'd come out and see what was going on," said the stranger, rising from the ground where he had been seated.

We now saw that he had a wooden leg, and that his clothing was composed in part of Confederate gray. He was very communicative, had a good-natured face, and informed us that we were on the island of St. George, and that he had been a Confederate soldier.

"I lost that leg at Gettysburg where you'un Yanks fought we'uns three days." Seeing me exchange looks with Moran, he said, "I knew you'ns was Yanks as soon as I saw you. I don't know what you are doing here, and I ain't going to ask. I might arrest ye if I was in the service, but I am done soldiering."

We laughed at the idea of a one-legged man without weapons, arresting five strapping, two-legged soldiers, with good muskets. The ex-Confederate joined in the fun, laughing when Grace

said that such an idea was enough to make a mule laugh.

He told us that when he had been taken prisoner at Gettysburg he had been treated "right well" by our men, who kindly took care of him after his leg was amputated. That before the war his father had kept the lighthouse on that island.

"I don't bear you Yanks no grudge, noway; I've swapped corn bread for hard-tack, and tobacco for coffee, with Yanks, and feel right brotherly towards them."

This was said with such apparent good will that we felt we could trust him when he inquired, —

"Where did you'ns all come from?"

Moran must have seen this disposition in our faces, for he said sharply, "Least said soonest mended, boys."

"If you'll stay here a while I'll bring you some corn bread and fixin's. You all used me well when I was wounded, and I ain't the man to forget it," said the ex-Confederate.

In a short time the ex-reb returned, bringing us half a ham, a card of matches, some meal, and a pint of salt. In return we offered him a knife, and a twenty-dollar Confederate note. He would not accept anything, and passed the note back with a grim smile. As he left us he shook us each kindly by the hand, and said significantly, "I hope you'll get through, Yanks."

Many comments were passed on the occurrence of the meeting, after the reb left.

"I tell you he is a square, honest fellow," said Jed.

Moran shook his head; while Robinson, as was habitual with him, repeated gloomily, —

"Resky, resky!"

"Robinson would say that to anything short of a dead certainty," drawled Grace. It was agreed by us all that a card of matches and some salt and meal were desirable, and a certain good, while the ills probable from the encounter might never come.

Jed thoughtfully emptied our powder into one of the powder-horns, broke up the matches and put them with the remaining percussion caps into the other one, and stowed them away in the haversack which he wore constantly about him.

That evening, acting on information received from the ex-reb, — namely, that vessels of our blockading squadron sometimes passed into the harbor through the passage between Cape St. George and the little island on the right, — we again began a coasting voyage in that direction.

That night we passed outside the harbor, and, perceiving an island on the opposite side of the passage, we paddled across the channel and landed. We remained here during the day, cooking the oysters which remained of our store, and resting. We had now become accustomed to rough seas, and were so confident of the seaworthiness of our boat

that when Moran proposed to continue our coasting voyage on the Gulf side of the island, we at once adopted the proposition.

By such a course, even if we did not fall in with any of our coasting vessels, we should be constantly nearing Santa Rosa Island, where a force of Federal soldiers were stationed, and at the same time would have as good a chance of encountering some vessel of our blockading squadron as if we remained in one place.

Our map embraced but a very small part of this territory, but Grace sketched the remainder as he remembered it. We coasted along as proposed for several days, with no incident worthy of record.

Late one afternoon, after an unusual season of calms, a sudden storm came up, which tossed our boat with great violence, throwing us into confusion and fear. Before we could unship our mast or furl our sail, the mast was torn violently from the boat. The wind increased in fury every moment, and it soon became so dark that we could not tell whither we were driving. At first Moran had endeavored to keep our craft head on to the seas, but finally, with set lips and frowning brow, put her before the wind, which drove us on through a seething sea.

We were ordered to sit in the bottom of the boat, and keep her clear of water by baling with some large shells we had on board. Our boat was tossed about like an eggshell, and every huge, white-

capped wave threatened to ingulf us. Our voices could scarcely be heard above the roaring of the waves and the shrieking of the winds. At one moment we were lifted on huge, mountainous billows, and at the next sunk deep down into the trough between them.

In the midst of this peril Moran exclaimed, "The breakers! Breakers ahead!" and above the howling winds we heard a noise like a ceaseless cannonade. It was the roar of the breakers as they dashed on the shore. We were now driven with merciless force towards the coast, and the sound of the breakers grew terribly near. The white caps of the coast threatened to break over us as we neared them. We were soon in their midst, and saw their white froth as they curled and broke on the shore, towards which we were being driven. "Stick to the boat," shouted Moran, "until you hear me shout, 'Jump!'"

A giant wave now caught up the boat, and hurled it with great force towards the shore, while another came hurrying in our rear, threatening to overwhelm us as we receded. "Take the line and be ready to jump with the next wave," shouted Moran.

A wave more threatening than any that had preceded it now came roaring astern, swept us inshore, and as it was ready to recede we jumped and ran, dragging the boat after us. Twice the waves struck us after this. When we reached a place of safety we turned, and found that Moran was missing.

He had been swept away, though Robinson still clung, half-drowned, to the boat, now filled with water. I made a rush and pulled him from the bows of the boat, where he was clinging, and carried him to the shore. We still clung to the line that held the boat, hoping to save her; but before we could drag her from the breakers the frail rope broke, and she drifted away.

Poor Jack Moran! brave Jack! where was he? The answer seemed to come from the hungry, roaring waves, "Drowned, drowned!" Yes, he was drowned in trying to save our lives. We had no time for grief. We watched, and walked the shore all night in the rain, hoping that Jack might be found.

The morning came and the storm continued. We found our boat, half filled with sand and nearly full of water, cast on the beach about a mile to the left of us.

On removing the sand we found one of our muskets and a few sweet potatoes, but the oars and everything else of value were gone.

We now had left a small drinking-cup, two powder-horns, some matches and percussion caps in good order, a rusty musket, our compass and knife, a haversack, one-half a canteen, a small piece of bacon and four sweet potatoes, and a boat without paddles, oars, or sails.

We were on a sandy key of land (we knew not where), without water or food other than that I have

stated. We were very thirsty, and our first thought was to look for fresh water. Travelling either north or south brought us to salt water, while running east and west was a long stretch of white sand as far as the eye could reach, with a mossy growth over the soil, and with here and there a stunted palmetto tree. We were now in great distress for water, for although we explored on every side, there was none to be found. To add to our misfortunes, Robinson was much exhausted and very sick; and, as I had become much attached to him, I would not abandon him to search for food or water.

Jed and Grace, however, set out on a journey of exploration, leaving me to care for Robinson. Soon after the boys were gone, the sun came out very hot, while the nearest approach to a shade I could find was under a scrubby palmetto-tree. Here I carried Robinson, who was now so weak that he could hardly speak, and when he did speak, to my distress, the single word he uttered was, "Water."

"We have no water," I explained: "the boys have gone in search of some."

After a while he feebly said, "Why didn't they dig?"

"Dig where?" I inquired.

"In the sand — anywhere." Seeing my incredulous look he explained, "If you dig down to the level of the salt water you will come to water which is filtered through the sand, and it will be fresh."

I at once began to dig vigorously, and soon had the satisfaction of reaching water; but I was still incredulous, and dipped up some of the water and doubtingly held it to my lips to test it. I was prepared to find it salt. It was fresh!

No one who has not passed through similar trials can understand the relief and joy I felt. It was indeed a rescue from despair.

In a few hours Jed and Grace returned, worn out and anxious, bringing one of the boat paddles they had found a mile below on the shore, but without having found water. Their surprise and joy was great when I gave them the cup, and, pointing to the hollow, explained how I had obtained it. The water, though slightly brackish, was fairly good. That afternoon we found some large shell-fish, which gave us a tough kind of meat, made a fire and cooked them, and ended the day with our hearts full of gloomy forebodings at the prospect before us.

The next day we washed out the boat, but found, on launching her, that she leaked badly. She had been strained either by the surf, or by the violent wrenching of the mast from her in the storm.

We did the best we could in repairing her, for it was imperative that we should get away from the sand island or cape on which we had been cast, as food was scarce, there was but little shade from the intense heat of the sun, the mosquitoes were fierce,

and, to complete our discomfort, the sand was infested with an insect that bit and annoyed us.

It was agreed that while we might find a better place, it was scarcely possible to find a worse one. With a few shell-fish for food we once more launched our craft into the now calm sea. We had wrenched out the one remaining seat of our boat, and had made it into a very poor substitute for a paddle.

All day we took turns in laboring at the paddles and in baling out water. Sometimes we were carried out of our course by the tides, and sometimes assisted by them in the westerly direction we still pursued. As we had no means of carrying fresh water with us, we often landed to obtain it.

The long, barren island or cape seemed without end; and as we were weakened by hunger, and our paddles were almost useless for our work, we made but little headway in our cruise. Jed had cut a short pole, which was, however, of but little use to us.

It was nearly sundown one afternoon when we had landed, very much discouraged, on the long stretch of sand. We were cooking some of the coarse shell-fish which had now for more than a week been our only food. We had used our last match, and were discussing the probabilities of the future. Jed was busy attempting a new way of cooking the shell-fish, when, suddenly dropping his dish, he pointed out to the open sea. He was

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pale and trembling with excitement, and unable to articulate. We looked, however, in the direction in which he pointed, and saw a large vessel, southeast from us, steaming along about a mile from the shore.

It took us but a moment to jump into our boat in the endeavor to reach her. We paddled with all our strength, while Jed waved the remains of his shirt on the pole he had cut a few days previous.

The waves ran high. Robinson protested that it was "resky," and said, "She may be a rebel craft, and we are likely to get so far away from land as not to be able to get back."

We were deaf, however, to all his forebodings, and determined, as Grace said, to "bunch all our chances in an attempt to reach the craft ahead of us."

We paddled with renewed vigor, and the steamer came nearer and nearer. We could now hear the throbbing of her engines, and see the men on her decks. We waved our hats and shouted frantically, but our voices were weakened by hardships, and as she still continued on her course, we apparently had not been heard, though she was now not over two-thirds of a mile from us and dead ahead. She passed us; "Great God! could we not attract her attention?" Jed waved his shirt frantically, but she still kept on her course.

Grace, who had taken no part hitherto in shout-

ing, here dropped his paddle, stood up, inflated his lungs, and uttered a piercing yell that startled us.

We now saw men hurrying on her deck. She changed her course in our direction. She had apparently heard Grace, and if so, we were rescued.

"What craft is that?" hailed Grace, as she came near us.

"The United States gunboat *Mercedes*. What boat is that?" came the answer and question from the steamer.

"A boat with escaping Union prisoners," was our answer.

In a moment we were alongside, were on deck, and thanked God that we were once more under the protection of the "Old Flag," for which we had suffered so much. It was now the 24th of November, almost three months since we had begun our escape from Andersonville.

The kind treatment received by us on board of the *Mercedes* will never be forgotten. The captain told us that he had stopped at the island of St. George to take in water, and while there an ex-rebel soldier had told him of meeting a party of Union soldiers, and had earnestly urged him to search for them. The captain, with this in view, had steamed along the coast.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

UNDER THE OLD FLAG AGAIN.

IT had been a peculiarity of our Andersonville life that prisoners manifested but little interest in each other's previous history. They were not generally curious regarding a man's past life, seemingly not caring from whence he came, or what his name was. They were content to take him as they found him, without further inquiry. They often invented names expressive of personality or character. Illustrative of this, two of Andersonville's most prominent personages were known as "Limber Jim" and "Big Pete," and very few among the prisoners knew their real names, or took pains to inquire them. The hideous struggles and miseries of this life crowded out, as non-essential, the minor curiosity common to men.

In our little circle John Moran was apparently an exception to this rule; but as I have never been able (though I have persistently made inquiries) to learn anything of his parents or friends, I am in doubt if this was really the name of my brave comrade.

Jed and I were known only as Jed and Dick.

On our arrival on the *Mercedes*, Robinson, who was feeble, was placed under the surgeon's charge. The morning after our arrival he sent for Jed and myself. I found him lying on a cot in the mate's cabin. He was dressed in clean linen, and a suit lent him by the captain. Robinson had endeared himself to us all by his conservative good sense, as well as by his goodness and rugged honesty. As I approached him under his new surroundings, the same familiar look which I had so often noticed now startled me.

The reader may, at some time in his life, have seen a face, or an expression on a face, which, though strangely familiar, he was unable to connect with a former experience. So now, as several times before, I found myself endeavoring to grasp the clew to this striking but intangible remembrance.

On entering, Jed sat down by his side, and in his sympathizing manner took his hand, saying, "What's the matter, old fellow?"

Robinson shook his head, saying, "Don't know as I shall pull through to get home, boys. Doubtful, doubtful."

"Oh, yes, you will," said Jed. "It's enough to make the dead alive, to know that we are under the old flag; isn't it, Dick?" Then in lower, reverent tones he said to Robinson, "God has been so good to us all! Do you remember what he says in one of his beautiful psalms? 'For I said in my haste, I am cut off before thine eyes; nevertheless thou

heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. . . . Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart.' Don't that fit your case?"

I too sat down by Robinson's side to comfort him. I asked him, for the first time, to what regiment he belonged.

"The —th Minnesota," was his reply, "but I am really a Massachusetts man. God bless the old State!"

"Why, that's our State!" exclaimed Jed.

Robinson continued, "I have a son in Massachusetts, and if anything should happen to me before we reach the North, I have written this letter, which I wish you to give to him, with my blessing. I have been in pursuit of fortune West, these long years, and have neglected him."

I took the letter from his hands, glanced at the superscription — it was directed to Richard Nickerson — it was for me. The man before me was my father. I now understood the meaning of that familiar look which I had so many times tried to connect with my remembrance. It was a child's remembrance of his long absent father's face. Robinson was my father's middle name.

In a few days we were landed at Pensacola, and from there were sent to New Orleans, where we received clothing and transportation North.

Upon our arrival in Washington we received a

furlough of sixty days, and, accompanied by my father, now much improved in health, we were in a short time at our old home again.

A correspondent of a newspaper, to whom the captain of the *Mercedes* had given an outline of our escape from Andersonville, had sent a long and exaggerated account of our adventures to a New York paper, under the caption of "Out of the Clasp of Death." Included in this was an account of my strange meeting with my father. Other newspapers had copied this, and the Associated Press had sent an abridged account broadcast over the land. Thus it was that, although we had not heard from home for many months, and knew nothing of events that had taken place there since we entered the Wilderness campaign, yet the home people knew our adventures, and our coming was not unexpected.

In our impatience to reach home, the way seemed longer and the stations more numerous than they ever were before. As we alighted from the cars at the little station of Centerboro, the whole village seemed to have turned out to welcome us. My father was received as one from the dead by his old neighbors and friends; while Mink barked frantically, and almost turned himself into a double knot with delight.

Among the crowd on the platform, to our great astonishment, was Colonel Gruff, with his servant Smutty, who wore one of the colonel's best uni-

forms for the occasion. The old veteran was glad enough to see his "poys."

As we started for home I said, "Come up to the house with us, colonel." Whereupon the old veteran took my aunt by the hand, and with much blushing on her part, cleared his throat and said, as if giving orders on parade, "Shentlemen, dis is my vife. Der nicest leetle voman dot ever vas!"

It seems that after I was taken prisoner, the colonel had written to my aunt. She had replied, and was so inconsolable that he wrote again to quiet her fears; but, as she refused to be comforted, when the army had settled down to the siege of Petersburg, he got a furlough and came North to try his personal influence in soothing her. He finally carried his ideas of consolation so far as to propose marriage, and was accepted.

Covered with scars and honors, and with the brevet rank of general, he shortly afterwards resigned his commission, and settled down to domestic life, for my aunt had refused to be fully comforted on any other terms.

Lieutenant Weston was killed at Cold Harbor, while bravely leading his company into that murderous charge. Previous to this he had been on a furlough home, where, in the presence of my aunt and others, he had fully confessed all the circumstances of receiving the money in the manner he had previously narrated to us.

Although the money could not be found, the

squire paid my aunt, with interest, the full sum received by his son.

Months afterwards a tin box containing the money was discovered among some refuse mattress straw in the squire's barn.

My father, being unfit for military duty, soon got his discharge from the army, and settled down in his native town. He wrote to pay the taxes on his Western farm, and was informed that it had become the centre of a growing town, and could be sold for a large sum of money.

Uncle John Warren came to see us, and we had many invitations from various quarters to make visits.

Under General Grant the war was now assuming such a phase that even Silas Eaton condescendingly admitted that affairs were managed "a leetle" better than he could do it himself.

The people of our village church arose to greet us as we entered the church the next Sunday morning. The dear old pastor, with tears streaming down his cheeks, thanked God for our great deliverance from death.

I wish that I might here end my story, but truth compels the addition of another chapter, where sorrow clasps hands with triumph and victory.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE WAR.

OUR furlough passed rapidly away. It was now time for us to report for duty with our regiment. Our commissions as first lieutenants had reached us a few days after our arrival, and in bright new uniforms we had visited at parties and receptions tendered us. Jed's noble face and manly presence inspired respect wherever he went.

We were soon at the front, where we were received by our old companions in arms with enthusiasm. The regiment was reduced to a mere skeleton, and we missed many familiar faces.

The last days of the Confederacy were drawing near. The iron resolution of the brave men in gray, who, half-starved, for so many months had carried the standard of revolt, now began to weaken. Grant drew his lines with a death-like grasp around them. One by one he cut off the railroad lines by which they received supplies.

The able Confederate commander, with the intention of compelling the retirement of our left flank, and relieving the pressure by breaking the Union lines near where it rested on the Appomat-

tox, east of Petersburg, surprised and captured Fort Stedman on the 25th of March.

Grant, having determined to open the campaign of the year on the 29th of March, meanwhile with inflexible tenacity went steadily forward, pushing his preparations for a grand movement to be directed against the Confederate right flank, to cut their railroad communications. The movement, though sudden, was anticipated by General Lee.

Breaking camp early on the morning of the 29th, the force of which we now formed a part moved by the rear and left, in order to make this flank movement without observation. The day before Jed had been slightly wounded by a minie ball in the hip, and the surgeon declared he was not in condition to endure a march. I, too, urged him to remain behind. Jed, however, was quietly persistent.

"Whether I live or die," said he, "it shall never be said that I willingly went to the rear when my regiment was marching to the front."

It was of no use to remonstrate with him, for, though very sweet-natured, he was also immovably obstinate where he thought his duty was concerned.

As our line of battle advanced, it was compelled to cross Hatch's Run before it could reach a fort on the opposite side of the river. All but one man of the Confederates had left this fort. This man had gathered the muskets abandoned by his less determined comrades, and single-handed attempted to contest our advance. The stream was too deep

for fording, but we found a tree fallen across the run, which served the purpose of a foot-bridge. Man after man fell dead from the fire of this one Confederate, while attempting to cross the log.

Seeing that one man was to delay an army, O'Keif, who commanded our company, sent several of our best marksmen to the tops of the trees, and the brave Confederate, after killing seven of our men, was in turn mortally wounded.

With swords and muskets in hand we went over the enemy's works. The Confederate defender wore the stripes of a major, and was not yet dead.

"This man is a hero," said Jed, as he knelt by his side to offer help and consolation. The rebel smiled and said, —

"You boys were too much for one reb, but some one must do the fighting when cowards run."

Something familiar in his voice arrested my attention; it was Walker, whose acquaintance we had made at Fort Monroe, when we were drummers. He lived but a short time. We buried him with the honors of war, and inscribed on the wooden slab above his grave, the story of his heroic defence of the fort. His sword and watch were afterwards sent to his friends.

On the clear, frosty morning of April 1st, we moved towards Five Forks, where Sheridan had fought the day before. The Southside Railroad

might be termed the life line, that connected Lee with his capital.

To guard this road, the rebel commander had barricaded it with a long line of works, running parallel with it, and it was defended by his bravest troops.

Sheridan's plan was to attract their attention by deploying cavalry in their front, while we were to take them in the rear by surprise. Silently we marched over this ravine-furrowed country.

At last we reached a hill where we looked down through the trees on the defences of the enemy. Our lines were formed, and then like an eagle from some mountain crag, we descended on the foe. Thus surprised in the rear they threw down their muskets, and surrendered in crowds. They soon perceived, however, that they had been outmanœuvred but not outnumbered. A rebel officer, seeing this, seized a musket, exclaiming, "We will whip you yet!" and shot down one of our men. A fight now took place which baffles description.

In the quick rush on the works, over rough ground, our company had been broken into two parts. Brave Captain O'Keif, on reaching the works, saw a rebel flag leaning against a tree, and shouted, —

"Come on, men, we'll have that flag!" and, followed by a dozen men, sprang in among the enemy. To reach the flag they were obliged to pass through a crowd of rebels, until four or five hundred men

separated them from their comrades. It was at this moment that the enemy rallied, and Captain O'Keif and his brave men found themselves cut off and all hope of escape destroyed. A rebel officer sprang at O'Keif's throat, calling upon him to surrender, but the brave Irish captain had no idea of surrendering. He seized the officer in his muscular arms, and hurled him bodily into the mass of foes confronting him. They were in such close quarters that neither party could fire without shooting their friends. Terrible blows were given and received. The contest was desperate; our own men advanced as they fought. At that moment the baffled foe poured in a deadly volley, and brave O'Keif fell dead, with his sword in his hand.

This fight was at its height, when a bugle blast sounded, and Sheridan's cavalry from a clump of woods a few rods distant came dashing in upon them.

The enemy turned to run. It was too late. Five thousand Confederates surrendered.

Sheridan rushed by me like a madman, shouting as he swung his clinched fist, "Smash 'em, smash 'em, boys!"

The Southside Railroad was in our hands. The fight was over and it was nearly dark. Jed had led the men of his company, broken from our ranks, into another part of the enemy's lines.

Exhausted with marching and fighting, I had

fallen asleep after the conflict. It was late that night that word came to us that Jed was missing. It was a lonely night search with the silence broken by the groans of the wounded.

During the search we found O'Keif, with his dead foes and his fallen comrades around him. We dug a shallow trench and buried them under a great oak, emblematic of their brave hearts. As we advanced over the tangled abatis, where the dead lay thickest, and the wounded feebly moaned, I heard a voice clearly but feebly singing, —

> "'Am I a soldier of the cross,
> A follower of the Lamb,'"

and then as if gathering strength to testify for the Master, after a pause, the voice rang out clearer and louder, —

> "'And shall I blush to own his cause,
> Or fear to speak his name.'"

We found Jed where he had fallen in the charge. The morning light was now breaking, and his face, though pale, was lighted up with an indescribable light, as if he had been communing with angels.

"Are you hurt badly, Jed?" I asked, while my voice was choked with tears.

His blood-saturated clothing told the story, without an answer. He put his hand in mine, and with the same brave smile that was a joy to all who knew him, said faintly, —

"I'm awful glad to see you once more, Dick."

Other comrades who loved him gathered around him (and who did not love dear Jed?) — and after a moment's silence he said more feebly, —

"I'm dying, Dick; God knows I'm not afraid, — and I'm glad to die for my country. Give my love to Aunt Tempy and Gruff and Mink."

"Can I do anything for you, Jed?" I inquired.

"Yes; turn me over so I can see the sunrise."

I heard him whispering a prayer. The sun came up, dispelling the morning mists and painting with softened light the eastern clouds, until they looked like the hills of a heavenly landscape far beyond. In a camp near by the fife and drum sounded the reveille, and the command was heard, "Fall in, fall in!" At this familiar sound, Jed, who had been lying with closed eyes, and fast ebbing strength, tried to rise, but fell back again on my arm.

"Dick, I love you. Tell Gruff to meet me up there."

He said no more after this, but fell asleep with the sunlight kissing his pallid face, and with the reveille still sounding. He awoke, I trust, to answer to the more glorious roll-call of a Captain whom he loved.

In the cemetery of his native town there may be seen a plain headstone, ever crowned in summer

time with flowers, and which bears this inscription: —

To the Memory of
Lieutenant Jedediah Hoskins,
Who fell mortally wounded while leading a
charge, at the Southside Railroad near
Petersburg, April 2d, 1865.

He was a soldier of the Union and a soldier of
the Cross.

More than two decades have passed since these events. I am now a man in middle life, with whitening locks, but I can never forget this boy-soldier, the friend of my youth, who illustrated the courage of the American soldier and the devotion of a simple Christian.

That we have an undivided nation, with not a star erased from our flag nor a slave beneath its folds, is because of such men, who faced death to secure "one country and one flag" for you and yours.